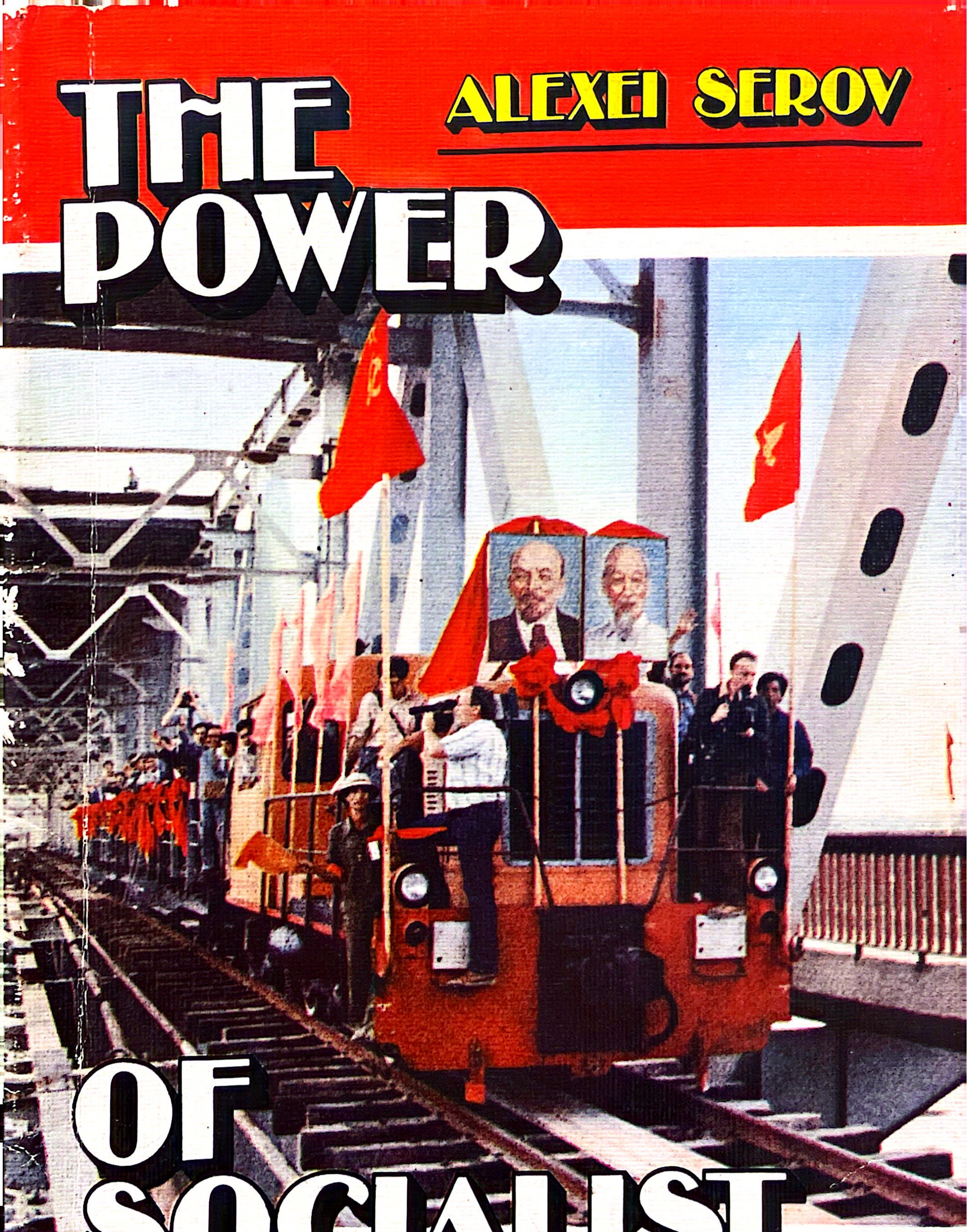
THE POWER OF SOCIALIST SOLIDARITY

ALEXEI SEROV



Novosti Press Agency Publishing House

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THE POWER OF SOCIALIST SOLIDARITY

FOR THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AUGUST REVOLUTION IN VIETNAM

Novosti Press Agency Publishing House
Moscow, 1985

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0801000000

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In the Name of the Common Cause

It is impossible to give a picture of the Vietnamese people's struggle for freedom, independence and social liberation, without looking at the history of Soviet-Vietnamese relations and studying the development of the fraternal links between the leading forces of the two socialist states, their Communist Parties.

The salvo from the cruiser *Aurora*, which heralded the beginning of the Great October 1917 Socialist Revolution in Russia, also roused the peoples of Asia to political activity. Lenin's theses on the national and colonial questions showed the oppressed peoples the way to national liberation and social transformation. This was pointed out by Ho Chi Minh, the first Vietnamese Communist, a revolutionary of the Leninist school and an outstanding leader of the international working-class movement: "The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution was of especially great importance for the historical destinies of the peoples of the East. It awoke the oppressed peoples of Asia, indicated the way to liberation for the peoples of other colonial and de-

Portrait of Ho Chi Minh presented by the Vietnamese President to N. Maximov, a Soviet specialist in engineering.
Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969), an outstanding revolutionary and internationalist, devoted his life to the struggle for the liberation of Vietnam from colonial oppression and the building of socialism on Vietnamese soil. He was Vietnam's first president after independence. The following words by President Ho are widely known: "In the face of imperialists trying to prolong the existence of their system which is hateful to all the peoples and which has already been shaken, we revolutionaries of all countries should constantly and in every way strengthen our unity around the USSR and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union."

pendent countries and set them an example of genuine national freedom."

Comrade Ho Chi Minh always emphasized another aspect of the influence of the October Revolution on the liberation movement of the Asian peoples: its practical assistance to the latter, including the training of political cadres capable of heading mass actions which are often spontaneous and of directing them into the right channel. He wrote: "...the Bolsheviks do not limit themselves to making loud speeches and adopting humane resolutions about oppressed peoples, but teach these oppressed peoples how to fight. They help them morally and materially... Without a moment's hesitation revolutionary Russia came to the assistance of nations which it had woken from their lethargic sleep by the very fact of its victorious revolution." For instance, between 1925 and 1932 more than forty Vietnamese attended the Communist University of the Working People of the East in Moscow, most of whom became staunch fighters in the Vietnamese revolution.

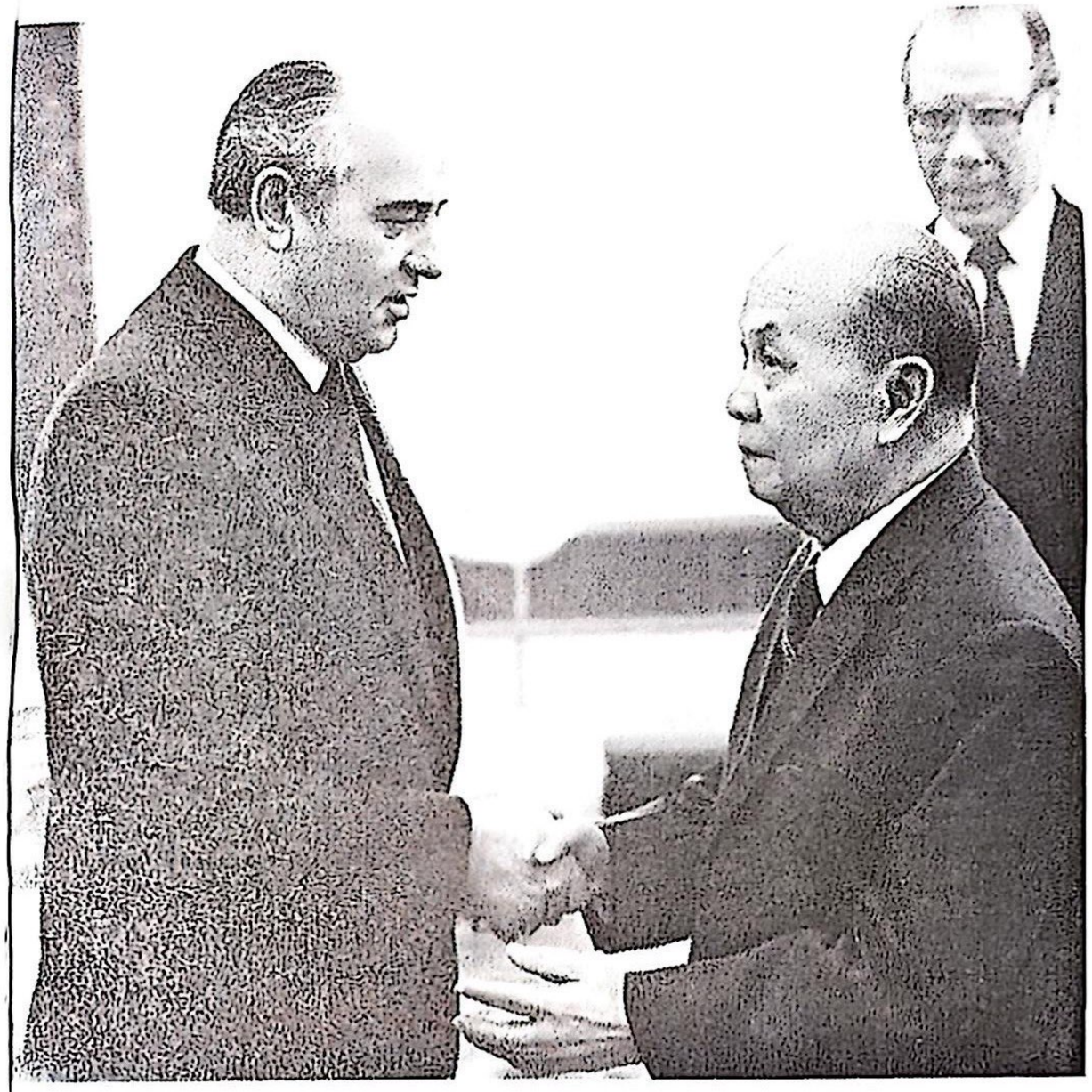
The Soviet Union actively supported the August Revolution in Vietnam and resolutely condemned the "dirty war" unleashed by the French colonialists in Indochina. Recognition of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by the Soviet Union was an important act of political and moral support. It had an immense impact on the development of the mass international movement in support of Vietnam.

The Soviet Union rendered great assistance to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in upholding its freedom and independence at the last stage of the War of Resistance against the French colonialists and in the course of the diplomatic struggle for consolidating the victories won by the Vietnamese people on the battlefield.

The Soviet Union came to the assistance of the Vietnamese people at a time when they were making strenuous efforts to rebuild and strengthen the liberated North Vietnam and taking vigorous diplomatic actions for the implementation of the 1954 Geneva agreements on Indochina which put an end to the colonial war waged by France against its peoples and outlined the principles of a political settlement in Indochina.

The many-sided Soviet assistance to the Vietnamese people assumed a broad scale at that stage. The cooperation of the two countries in all fields was vitally necessary for the existence and social restructuring of the young democratic state which had just fought a war of independence. A firm basis for close Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation was laid during President Ho Chi Minh's visit to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1955. Agreements on Soviet economic assistance to Vietnam signed during the Vietnamese leader's stay in Moscow provided, in particular, for the urgent delivery of goods essential for stabilizing living standards in Vietnam. More agreements were signed later on economic and trade cooperation, on the shipment of goods to the DRV by sea, on collaboration in the field of science, technology and culture, agreements covering in fact all spheres of life of the two countries.

Implementation of these agreements enabled democratic Vietnam, with the Soviet Union's help, to rebuild its traditional industries and lay the foundation of such branches of the economy which the country could not have in colonial conditions but which were essential for the existence of an independent state. Vietnam's first engineering enterprise, the Hanoi Mechanical Works, was commissioned in 1958. The country's first fertilizer plant at Lam Thao began to produce superphosphate in 1962. In 1961 the industrial enterprises and cooperative



A meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and Truong Chinh, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam and Chairman of the SRV State Council (the Kremlin, March 14, 1985). They noted with satisfaction relations of solidarity between the CPSU and the CPV, the USSR and the SRV, and the Soviet and Vietnamese people. While discussing various international problems, the Soviet side expressed its solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnamese people against the intrigues of the imperialists and their hirelings, and for making South-East Asia a zone of peace, stability and goodneighbourly relations.

farms of Thanh Hoa province received electricity from the Banthat hydropower station.

In those years Soviet organizations gave democratic Vietnam considerable assistance in solving urgent social problems and overcoming the hard legacy of the colonial past, particularly in the field of public health and public education. Soviet specialists working in the DRV helped train many thousands of skilled workers. A great number of Vietnamese workers and specialists had had practical training at Soviet factories, state farms and other enterprises and institutions. In early 1962, for example, there were nearly 3,000 Vietnamese students and 10,000 trainees in the Soviet Union.

The fraternal nature of Soviet-Vietnamese relations in that period was reflected in the following words of Comrade Pham Van Dong, who spoke movingly about the selfless work of Soviet specialists in Vietnam: "Under the scorching tropical sun, at various construction sites, in the noxious atmosphere of mines, in the mountains and jungles untrodden by man, everywhere Soviet specialists are building our country together with our specialist personnel and our people, thus displaying a high spirit of revolutionary enthusiasm and selflessness. They are worthy citizens of the Land of the Soviets and dear brothers of the Vietnamese people."

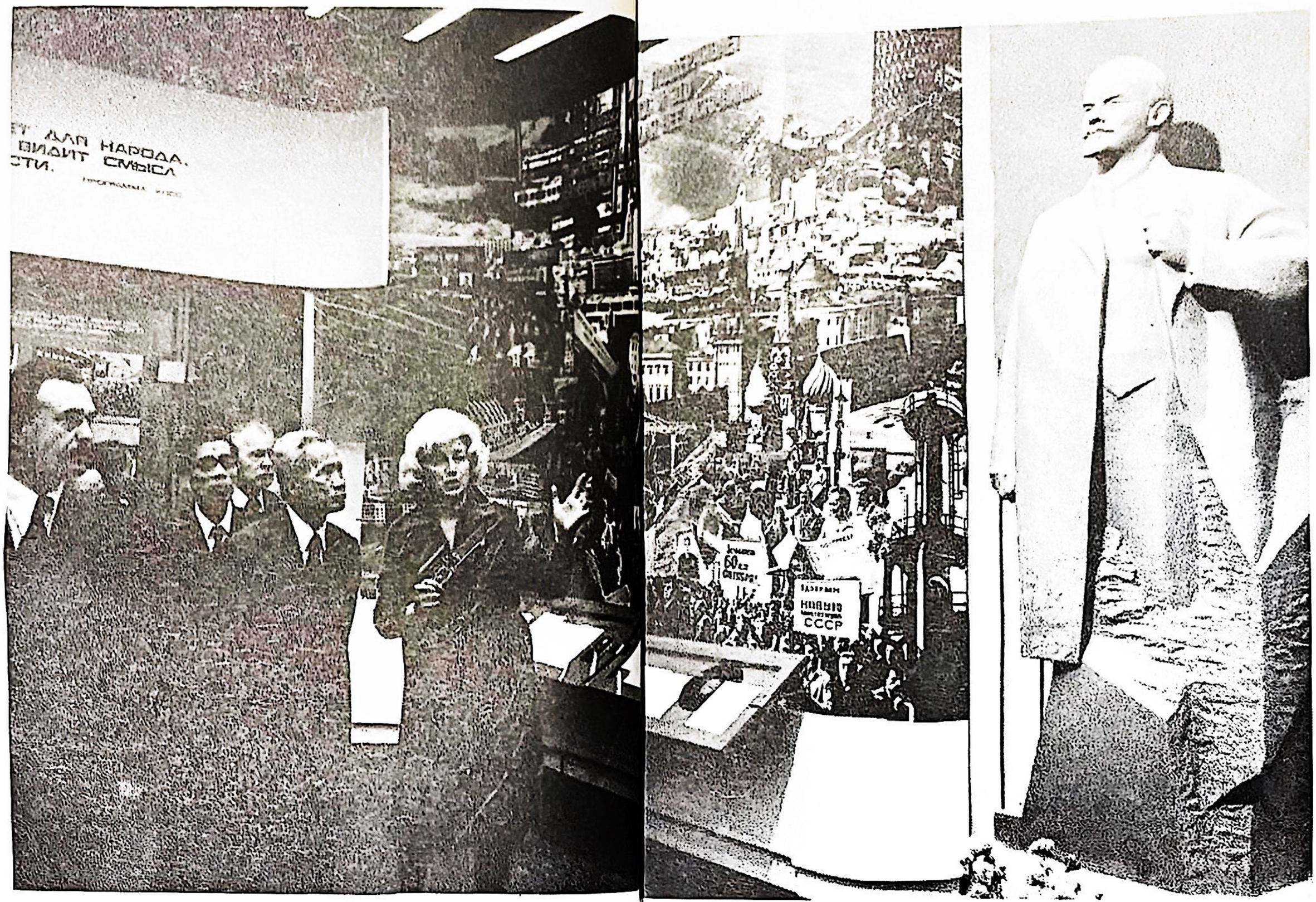
The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was faced with grave danger in late 1964 when the US imperialists took the course of military intervention against sovereign socialist North Vietnam. There began a new stage in the relations between the DRV and the USSR and their peoples which resolutely joined their forces to protect the gains of the Vietnamese revolution, to uphold the right of the Vietnamese people to follow the road of socialism. The Soviet Union gave every assistance to fighting Vietnam.

In February 1965 when the US air force began massive bombing raids against North Vietnam the Soviet government, true to the principles of socialist internationalism, took all necessary measures to ensure the security and strengthen the defensive capability of the fraternal socialist country.

The fraternal assistance of the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community enabled the DRV to build up the People's Army within the shortest possible time and to form modern antiaircraft missile ground and air force units, which played a decisive role in repulsing the attacks of the air pirates. Soviet specialists sent to the DRV gave efficient aid to Vietnamese antiaircraft units in the installation and use of the weapons and equipment.

While rendering the fraternal country necessary assistance in strengthening its defence capability and in maintaining and consolidating its military and economic potential, the Soviet Union also vigorously supported the just position taken by the DRV government and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam on the question of a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem. In their fight against US imperialist aggression the Vietnamese people were resolutely supported by the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: "On behalf of the entire Party, of all Soviet people the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union resolutely demands that the USA stop its aggression against Vietnam and withdraw all interventionist troops from that country... We categorically declare that if the aggressors escalate the shameful war against the Vietnamese people they will have to contend with ever mounting support for Vietnam from the Soviet Union and other socialist friends and brothers."

This statement has become a programme of action for all Soviet people. A mass movement of solidarity with



During an official visit to the USSR a Party and Government delegation from fraternal Vietnam visited the Central Museum of Lenin in Moscow, the main memorial and scientific centre connected with the name of the great revolutionary and thinker.

Vietnam assumed mainly the form of selfless efforts to fulfil orders for the fighting Vietnamese people. The Soviet Union was shipping to the DRV increasing amounts of goods needed by the Vietnamese people for repulsing US aggression and continuing socialist construction: military equipment, including aircraft, missiles, tanks, artillery and small arms, as well as machines and industrial equipment, fuel, food, medical supplies, and so on.

Soviet merchant seamen showed a high internationalist spirit by promptly delivering to fighting Vietnam badly needed goods from Vladivostok, Odessa, Nakhodka and Novorossiisk. During the war in Vietnam up to forty Soviet ships moored at North Vietnamese ports every month. Two-thirds of all freight turnover of democratic Vietnam were handled by Soviet seamen at that time.

A considerable contribution to strengthening the DRV's economy and defence capability was made by Soviet experts in various fields, several thousand of whom worked shoulder to shoulder with their Vietnamese friends. The construction of industrial and other projects with Soviet assistance continued in North Vietnam as well as the rehabilitation of facilities damaged by US bombings.

A large number of Vietnamese specialists and skilled workers were being trained in the USSR.

The solidarity of Soviet people with the people of Vietnam found expression in a broad campaign launched by Soviet public organizations, which included meetings, mass rallies and the collection of funds for Vietnam.

The 24th CPSU Congress played an exceptionally important role in exposing the manoeuvres of US imperialism around the "Vietnamization" of the war and in mobilizing world public opinion for further struggle for the triumph of the Vietnamese people's just cause. In its

appeal "Freedom and Peace to the Peoples of Indochina!" the congress of Soviet Communists strongly condemned the crimes perpetrated by the US military, expressed support for the heroic peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea and called for broadening the worldwide movement for ending the imperialist aggression in Indochina; it insisted on the withdrawal from there of the troops of the United States and its allies and the implementation of the legitimate right of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea to be the masters of their own land. The Soviet Union took a principled stand at the talks on Vietnam held in Paris in late 1972 and early 1973. General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam Le Duan said the following about the significance of the assistance of the Soviet Union to the Vietnamese people and its support in bringing about a settlement in Vietnam: "...the Soviet people have invariably stood by the people of Vietnam and have been their closest friends, who together with them went through all their difficulties and shared all their sorrows and joys..."

Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation today is as broad and varied as ever. There is in fact no sphere of political, economic and international life where the two countries do not cooperate, do not work closely together in the interests of both nations, in the interests of peace and socialism.

The signing on November 3, 1978 of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the USSR and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was a momentous event in the political life of the two peoples. The document summed up what had been achieved in the result of the development of their fraternal relations strengthened by joint struggle and peaceful efforts and defined the

basic principles of the future development of all-round links between the two countries.

Based on the rich experience of Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation in the preceding period the treaty marked the beginning of a new phase in consolidating unbreakable friendship and militant solidarity of the Soviet Union and Vietnam and raised to a qualitatively new level and broadened the scope of the all-round cooperation between their parties and peoples. The Soviet-Vietnamese treaty is a manifestation of the close ties of comradeship and solidarity among the countries of the socialist community, and a major contribution to the strengthening of the socialist countries' unity and of the positions of world socialism.

At present trade and economic relations are an important component of the cooperation of the two countries. The volume of Soviet economic assistance to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the last five years grew by nearly 250 per cent compared with the 1975-1980 period. More than 20 major projects are currently being built or modernized in Vietnam with Soviet aid, while designing and surveying work is being carried out for over 50 projects. Some of the newly completed or nearly completed projects are of key significance for building up the economic potential of socialist Vietnam, among them the Chinh Tuc tin mine, the Mong Duong coal mine, the Pha Lai thermal power station, the Bim Son cement works, and the superphosphate plant at Lam Thao. Work is in full swing at the construction site of the Hoa Binh hydropower complex. Preparation is under way for the construction of the Trian hydropower plant, the biggest power project in southern Vietnam. The building of facilities for the prospecting and extracting of oil and gas on the continental shelf of southern Vietnam has been completed in the main within a short time,

exploration drilling has begun in the open sea and the first promising results have been obtained. Preparations are being made to organize with the help of Soviet experts the cultivation of rubber-bearing plants on a 50,000-hectare area. All this means that the industrial potential of socialist Vietnam will grow considerably with Soviet assistance by the end of Vietnam's third five-year plan period (1980-1985).

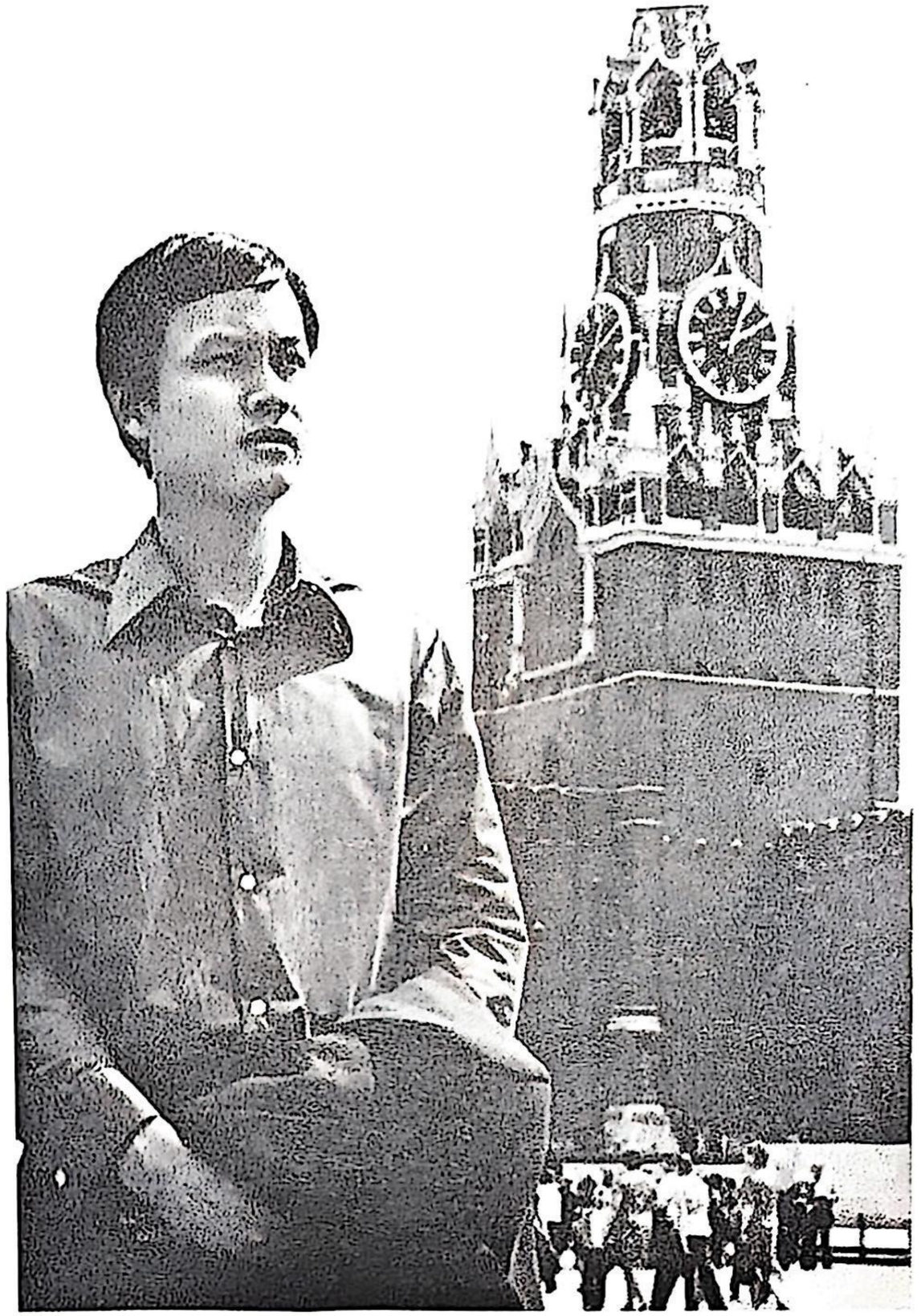
New prospects for growth opened before the Socialist Republic of Vietnam when it joined the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in 1978. "Vietnam's entry into the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance is a historical necessity and a great event in the life of the socialist system," said the newspaper *Nhan Dan*, describing it as a "logical step along the road to socialism." The cooperation of the SRV with the fraternal socialist states has become an important factor in the rapid rehabilitation of the war-ravaged economy and its speedy development. The assistance of CMEA countries covers all spheres of the republic's social and economic life and is directed above all towards increasing its productive forces and building the material base for socialist construction. This concerns such key industries as power engineering, transport, machine building and mining. The cooperation of CMEA countries with the SRV is not limited to carrying out tasks of the country's industrial development but also includes measures to help raise living standards of the Vietnamese people. Hungary and Cuba are helping Vietnam in the building of modern livestock farms; Bulgaria—in the construction of enterprises for processing farm produce; Poland and Cuba—in the building of sugar refineries, and the German Democratic Republic—in the building of a cotton mill. Also under construction are food canning,

tea, tobacco and other enterprises of the food and light industries.

The guidelines and ensuing various forms of economic, scientific, and technological cooperation worked out at the summit meeting of the CMEA member countries held in Moscow in June 1984 raise the relations between socialist states to a qualitatively new level. The meeting's decision to increase assistance to Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia promotes further expansion of the cooperation between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and other fraternal countries.

The same ends are served by the long-term programme for the development of economic, scientific and technological cooperation between the USSR and the SRV, signed in Hanoi on October 31, 1983. This document is based on a scientific analysis of the development of Soviet-Vietnamese relations in the economic, scientific and technological spheres over the preceding decades, taking into account the specific features of economic development of both the USSR and Vietnam and the different levels of their development. Threrefore, the long-term programme is not just a declaration, it is a set of clearly defined directions of further expanding cooperation in these spheres, of enriching it with new content and new forms and, in the final count, of building up, in the most efficient manner, the economic potential of the two countries in the interests of the Soviet and Vietnamese peoples, of the entire socialist community and of the cause of universal peace.

The long-term programme, which is in keeping with the tasks set by the 4th and 5th Congresses of the Communist Party of Vietnam, will undoubtedly be a major factor in implementing the first stage of the SRV's socialist industrialization, covering the 1980s, and its further stages.



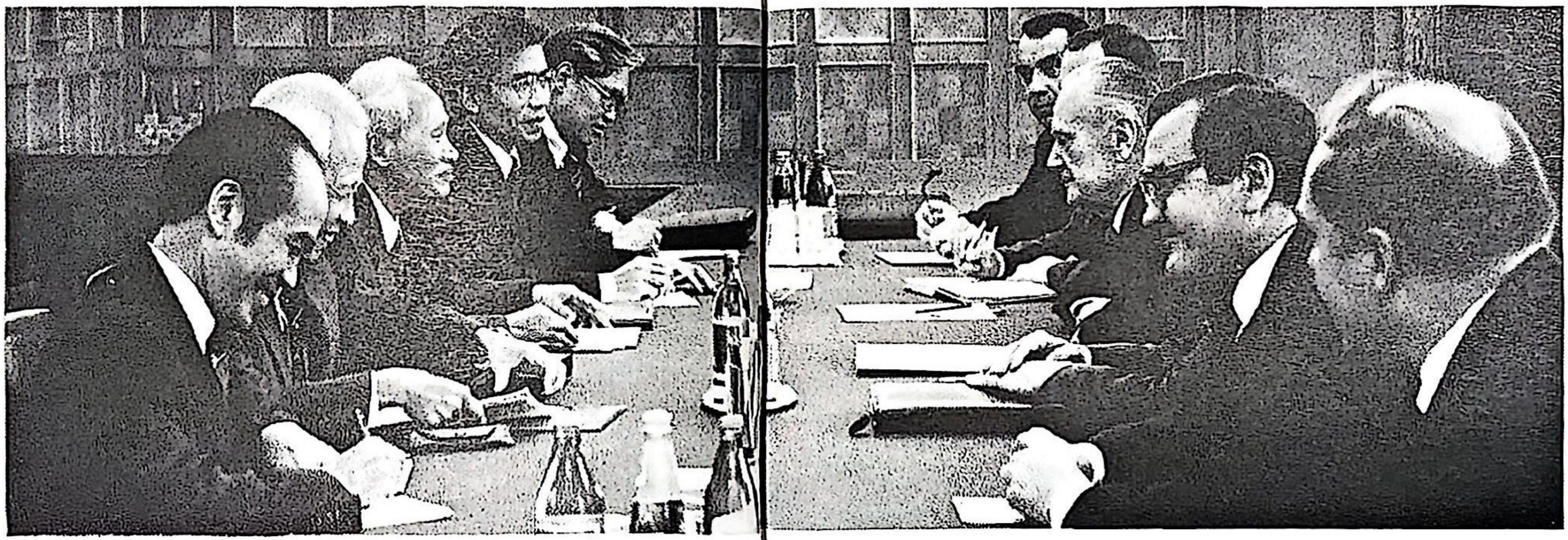
A Vietnamese student in Moscow's Red Square.

The 5th CPV Congress, as is known, has set the task of "concentrating efforts on the development of agriculture which should be regarded as a top priority, transforming ...agriculture into a large-scale branch of socialist production, increasing the output of consumer goods and continuing to build certain important branches of the heavy industry, and combining agriculture and light industry and the heavy industry within a rational structure".

These branches of the SRV's national economy are referred to in the long-term programme as the principal areas of cooperation between the SRV and the USSR. This cooperation will be stepped up above all in agriculture, the fuel and power industries, including geological prospecting and the extraction and processing of oil and gas, and in the field of transport and communications. Cooperation will be continued in the setting up of the basic machine-building and metal-working industries, and of the chemical and building-materials industries. This collaboration is in full confirmity with the main directives of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

In keeping with the long-term programme constant attention will be given, as before, to the training of Vietnamese national personnel for such spheres as culture, education and public health, and to accelerating the development of science and technology in Vietnam.

The long-term programme provides for the expanding with the Soviet assistance of the production of goods for export with account being taken of the requirements of



A working meeting of the heads of government of the Soviet Union Nikolai Tikhonov (right centre) and of Vietnam Pham Van Dong (left centre) in the Kremlin (June 1984).

the Soviet domestic market and with a view to further promoting economic cooperation of the fraternal countries on a mutually beneficial, stable and well-balanced basis.

One of the main trends in Soviet-Vietnamese economic cooperation will continue to be the setting up of joint enterprises as an important means of accelerating Vietnam's economic development and training highly skilled national personnel. This work was begun in the last five-year period. The projects include the *Vietsovpetro*, a joint enterprise for prospecting and extracting oil and gas, the implementation of the plans to set up new rubber plantations, and others. A major advantage of these projects is that they provide employment not only in industrial but also in rural areas, which is essential, for instance, for the southern part of Vietnam.

The long-term programme envisages an increase in the exchange of goods organized through cooperatives and domestic-trade agencies. Measures are already being taken in this direction which will greatly help develop the traditional handicrafts and local industries of democratic Vietnam.

It is said in the long-term programme, and this is a point of great significance, that the two sides intend to improve coordination of the work of the planning and economic agencies of the USSR and the SRV so that "questions connected with the implementation of the adopted programmes for the promotion and deepening of cooperation would be examined on a regular, comprehensive and reciprocal basis".

Besides laying down guidelines for future cooperation on a strictly scientific basis, the long-term programme identifies specific areas of cooperation to which priority is being given at present. These are:

— delivery from the Soviet Union of machines, equipment, fuel and lubricants, fertilizers and pesticides for the purpose of developing the SRV's agriculture, expanding the production of tropical crops and helping to solve the food problem;

— carrying on the construction of power projects;

The crew of the *Soyuz-37* spaceship: commander, pilot-cosmonaut of the USSR Viktor Gorbatko, and researcher-cosmonaut Pham Tuan of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

— setting up of a modern metal-making industry in the SRV, first of all Soviet assistance in designing and building a plant to produce 500,000 tons of steel a year

from scrap iron, and also the completion of a feasibility study for the building of an iron-and-steel works with an annual capacity of 1.5 million tons of steel;

— modernization, expansion and construction of several machine-building enterprises, increase in the mining of apatite and in the production of phosphate fertilizers, and the setting up of oil-refining and petrochemical industries, organization of the manufacture of articles from natural rubber;

— completion of the construction of the big Thang Long bridge, modernization of several railway lines, construction of the Hanoi-Ho Chi Minh City radio-relay line, further extension of geology prospecting in Vietnam, and so on.

In other words, the long-term programme is a comprehensive plan, thought out in every detail and covering a period to the end of this century. It will enable Vietnam to achieve notable progress in its economic development as it enters the 21st century. Many projects under this plan are already being carried out with Soviet technical aid.

Successful Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation is not of course restricted to the economic sphere. In recent years there has also been a rapid growth of bilateral ties in the spheres of culture, education and the training of specialist personnel. This is seen in the staging in Hanoi of classic and Soviet ballets, the holding of Soviet Culture Days in Vietnam, etc. Vivid evidence of the flowering of the Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation was the space flight performed in July 1980 by Viktor Gorbatko and Pham Tuan, the first representative of the Asian continent to have flown in outer space. The two countries are further coordinating their actions on the international scene as members of the socialist community.

The entire course of development of Soviet-

After the space flight Pham Tuan plants his tree at the Cosmonauts' Alley in Baikonur.

Vietnamese relations shows that the USSR and socialist Vietnam are stepping up their joint actions in the struggle for peace and the security of nations, for removing the danger of a thermonuclear catastrophe and for detente in Asia and throughout the world. The Soviet Union and the countries of Indochina, Mongolia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have put forward constructive proposals for improving the political climate in the Asian continent.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly voiced its full support of the efforts of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of Kampuchea aimed at starting a dialogue between the countries of Indochina and the ASEAN states, at making South-East Asia a zone of peace. This was confirmed once again during a visit to the SRV in November 1984 of a Soviet parliamentary delegation led by Vladimir Dolgikh, deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet, alternate member of the CPSU Central Committee Political Bureau and a secretary of the Party's Central Committee. The countries of Indochina believe that a dialogue between the countries concerned is the only way to settle differences between countries of South-East Asia on the basis of equality, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. Such a dialogue may be based on the well-known initiatives of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea concerning the convocation of a regional conference, the conclusion of non-aggression treaties and agreements on the basic principles of relations between the countries of Indochina and the ASEAN countries, and so on. The Soviet Union has repeatedly offered to guarantee, together with other permanent member states of the UN Security Council, that accords reached between the two groups of countries will be fulfilled.

The present close relations between the USSR and the SRV and other countries of Indochina enable these states to coordinate their efforts in the international arena and effectively to cooperate in matters of foreign policy. The countries of Indochina invariably support the Soviet Union's peaceful foreign policy and Soviet proposals aimed at improving the international situation, ending the arms race and averting the threat of a world nuclear war. These initiatives have been advanced, in particular, in speeches by Soviet leaders and in the set of the new peace proposals made by the Soviet Union at the 39th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Light and Power

The electric bulb hanging from the ceiling of the hotel room flickered and went out. The blades of the fan stopped, the humming of the air conditioner died down and in a few minutes the oppressive heat reminded us that the temperature outside was 35° Centigrade. "It won't be long," the hotel attendant explained with a smile. "The city's electricity system is being checked and modernized because the new Pha Lai power station will soon be commissioned."

The current was indeed turned on in forty minutes this time, but the supply of electricity can be interrupted for much longer periods both in Hanoi and elsewhere. Electric power is still in short supply and whole city districts may have to be switched off in order to provide electricity to industry, transport and irrigation pumping stations. When we had supper that night at Uncle Hieu's tiny restaurant lit by kerosene wick lamps our kind host said: "Never mind, this is only temporary. Soon Pha Lai will give us light."

Vietnam's enemies like to write about its difficulties. Vietnam's friends are also aware of these difficulties: the country lacks many things, including prime necessities. The obvious causes of these shortages are the long colonialist domination, the ruinous effects of the US imperialist aggression, the problems involved in putting the economy of the country's southern provinces on a socialist footing and, finally, the attempts of the enemies of Vietnam to hinder the building of a new life in the country. Naturally, much attention is given in socialist Vietnam to the unresolved problems, and working people are told about them openly, and what is most important, about the steps that are being taken to overcome the shortcomings and shortages.

The energy problem is a matter of special concern. That is why its solution is given such prominence in the documents of the 4th and 5th Congresses of the Communist Party of Vietnam and of plenary meetings of the Party's Central Committee, and that is why assistance to Vietnam in the development of its power industry is one of the key aspects of the economic, scientific and technological cooperation between the USSR and the SRV. The commissioning of the Hoa Binh and Trian hydroelectric power stations and the Pha Lai thermal power plant, which are being built with Soviet aid, will make a decisive contribution to solving the energy problem on a nationwide scale.

The rehabilitation and construction in the 1950s of seven small power stations with a total capacity of about 20,000 kilowatts was the first step in Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation in the field of power engineering. After that two major power projects—the Uong Bi thermal power station and the Thac Ba hydroelectric power plant—were designed and built with Soviet technical assistance. During the US aggression these two stations came under heavy bombing. The air pirates sought to raze

them to the ground. But both power plants were saved thanks to the courageous and selfless efforts of their defenders. Today their turbines supply a considerable share of electricity needed in the northern areas of the country.

In the extreme northeast of the Soviet Union flows the

A Soviet excavator operator with his Vietnamese friends at the construction site of a dam on the river Song Da (Vietnam).

river Kolyma. There are no big towns in the region, only settlements separated from one another by hundreds of kilometres of barren wastes covered with snow for many months of the year. But people here are conquering the forbidding country with its rigorous Arctic conditions.

The first hydropower station on the Kolyma is being built near the settlement of Sinegorye. In the settlement's

club house there is a stand with cuttings from Vietnamese and Soviet newspapers and photographs. One of them shows the construction site of a big dam, with bulldozers and excavators and nearby a battery of antiaircraft machine guns. The stand's exhibits include two rusty bits of metal, fragments of an American aerial bomb.

The stand was shown to me by a tall, broad-shouldered man who walked with a slight limp. He is known to everybody at the Kolyma hydropower project. His friendly smiling face can also be seen in some of the photographs on display, though there he was a much younger man. Valentin Avdeyev often comes here to tell young people about the days he had spent in Vietnam, about people who are so far away and yet so near in spirit to Soviet people, about the bonds of friendship which are stronger than metal. There is a Vietnamese order, next to Soviet decorations, on Avdeyev's chest. The fragments of an American bomb had been extracted from his body.

Valentin Avdeyev, an engineer, has worked on hydropower projects for thirty years. After graduating from the Leningrad Polytechnical Institute he took part in building the Bratsk hydropower station in Siberia. Leading experts of Soviet hydraulic engineering who were in charge of the project noted the technical abilities and industry of the young specialist. That was how Avdeyev was sent to Vietnam to help build the Thac Ba dam on the river Trai.

Like his Vietnamese colleagues, Avdeyev did not run to shelter the moment the air-raid sirens sounded. His primary concern was the safety of the personnel and equipment. During a particularly fierce air attack he was hit by fragments of an American bomb.

"I was unconscious for a long time," he recalled. "I

owe my life to my Vietnamese friends. For almost 24 hours they carried me on a stretcher through the jungle to the hospital. And during the operation Vietnamese doctors gave me their blood."

While still in the hospital Valentin Avdeyev was visited by Comrade Pham Van Dong who presented him the Order of Labour.

The Soviet engineer then went home where he underwent prolonged medical treatment. He was operated on nine times, went through what is known as clinical death and had to use an artificial kidney. He was given 1,500 injections during one year.

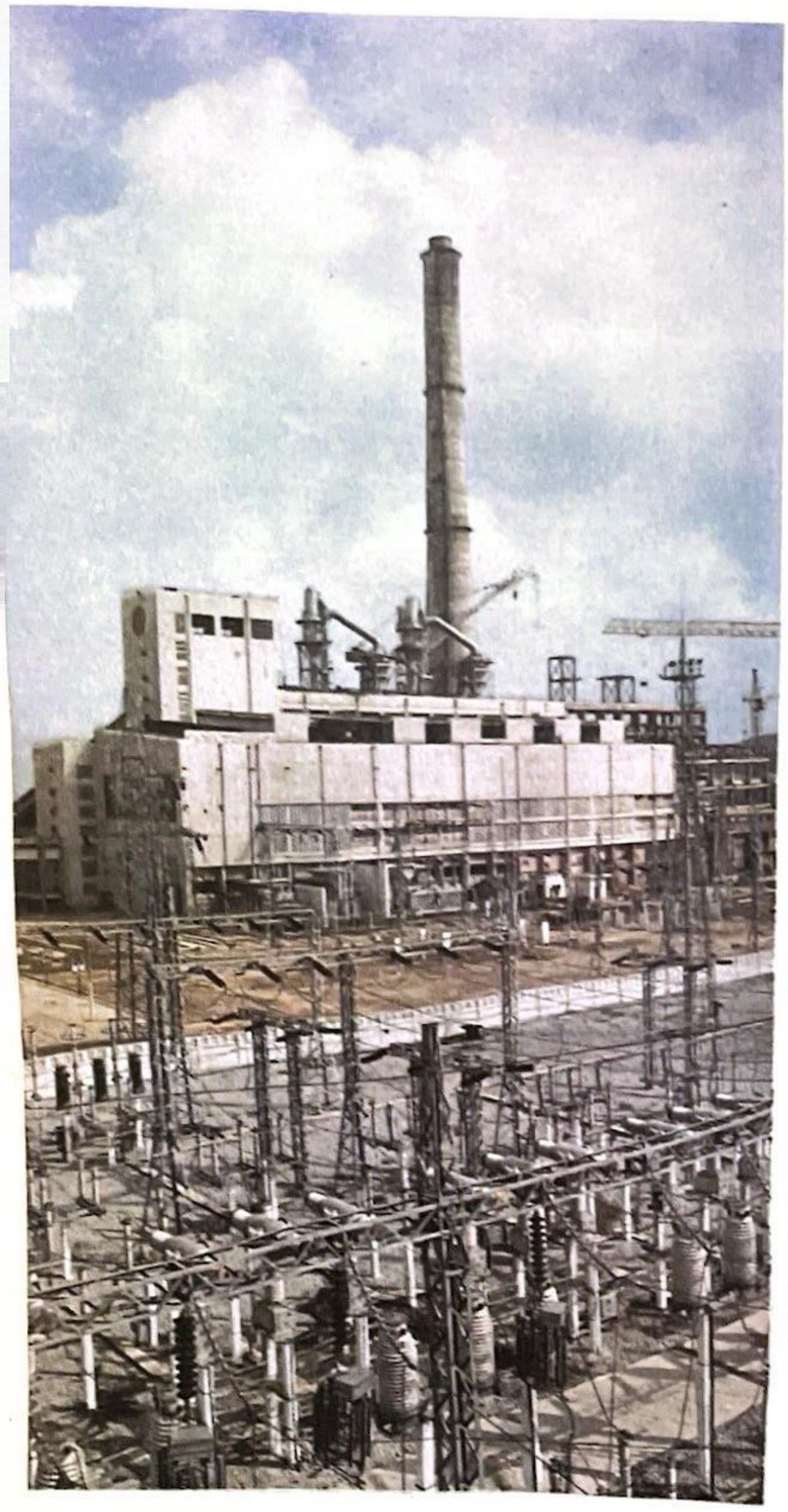
His treatment had not yet been completed and he still walked with a stick when he came to the construction site of the Kolyma hydropower station. Soon he was appointed the project's manager.

Along with his work Valentin Avdeyev underwent daily training in an effort to overcome the effects of his injuries. Finally he was able to throw away the walking stick and resumed skiing and taking part in sports competitions.

Under his direction the builders introduced many innovations which saved time, improved the project's design and reduced construction cost. This is particularly important since the Kolyma hydropower station was being built in very difficult conditions: on permafrost and in a seismically dangerous zone where winter lasts for nine months of the year and the temperature at time drops to −60° Centigrade. Equipment and materials for the project had to be brought from a distance of 5,000 kilometres.

"You know," Avdeyev said, "I often find parallels between that faraway Vietnamese project and the Kolyma station. To be sure, geographically there is little in common between subarctic tundra and tropical

A Soviet Party and Government delegation led by Geidar Aliyev, Political Bureau member of the CPSU Central Committee and First Deputy of the USSR Council of Ministers, visited the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in October and November 1983. Members of the delegation planting a tree to mark its visit to the Pha Lai power station.

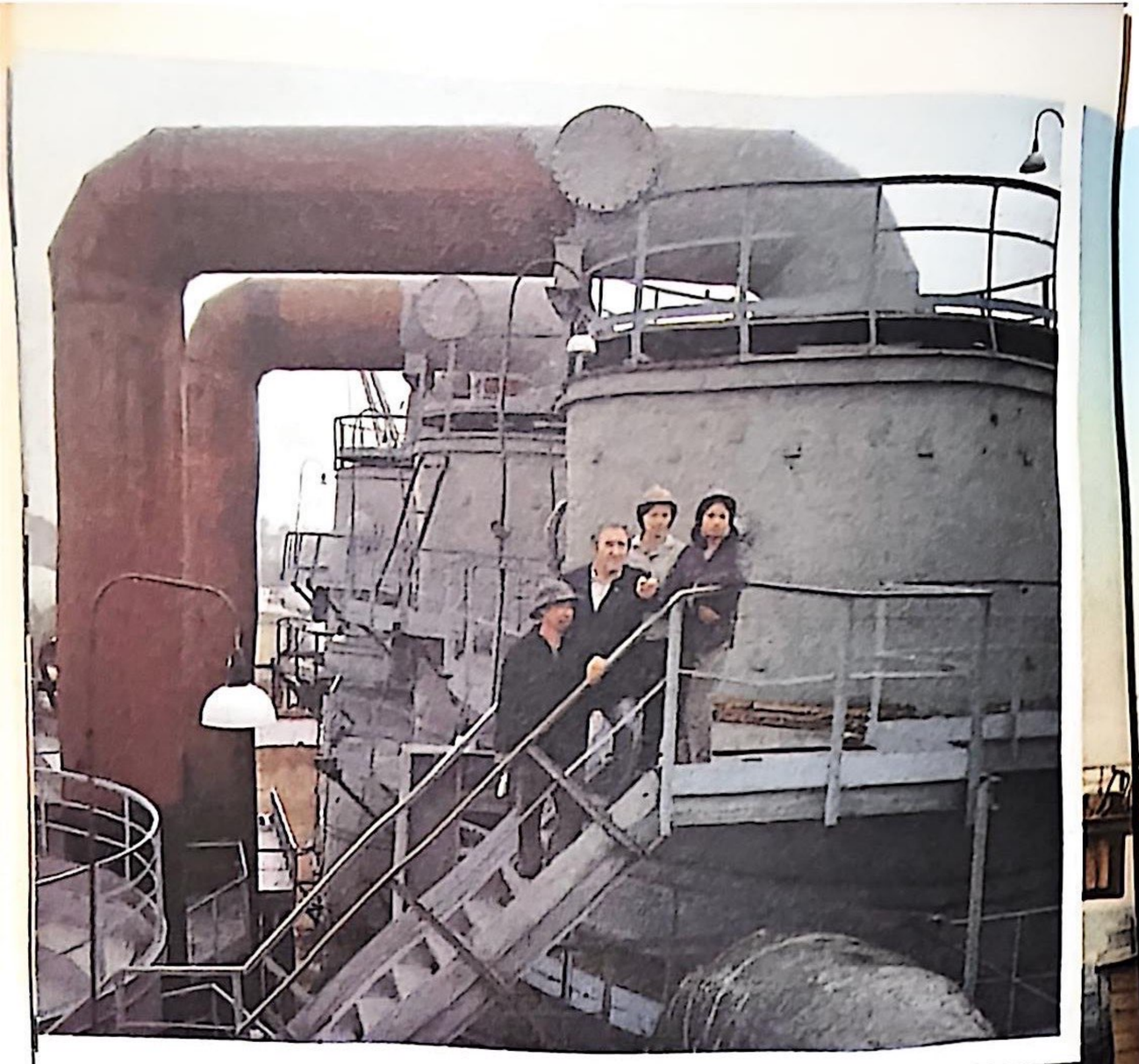


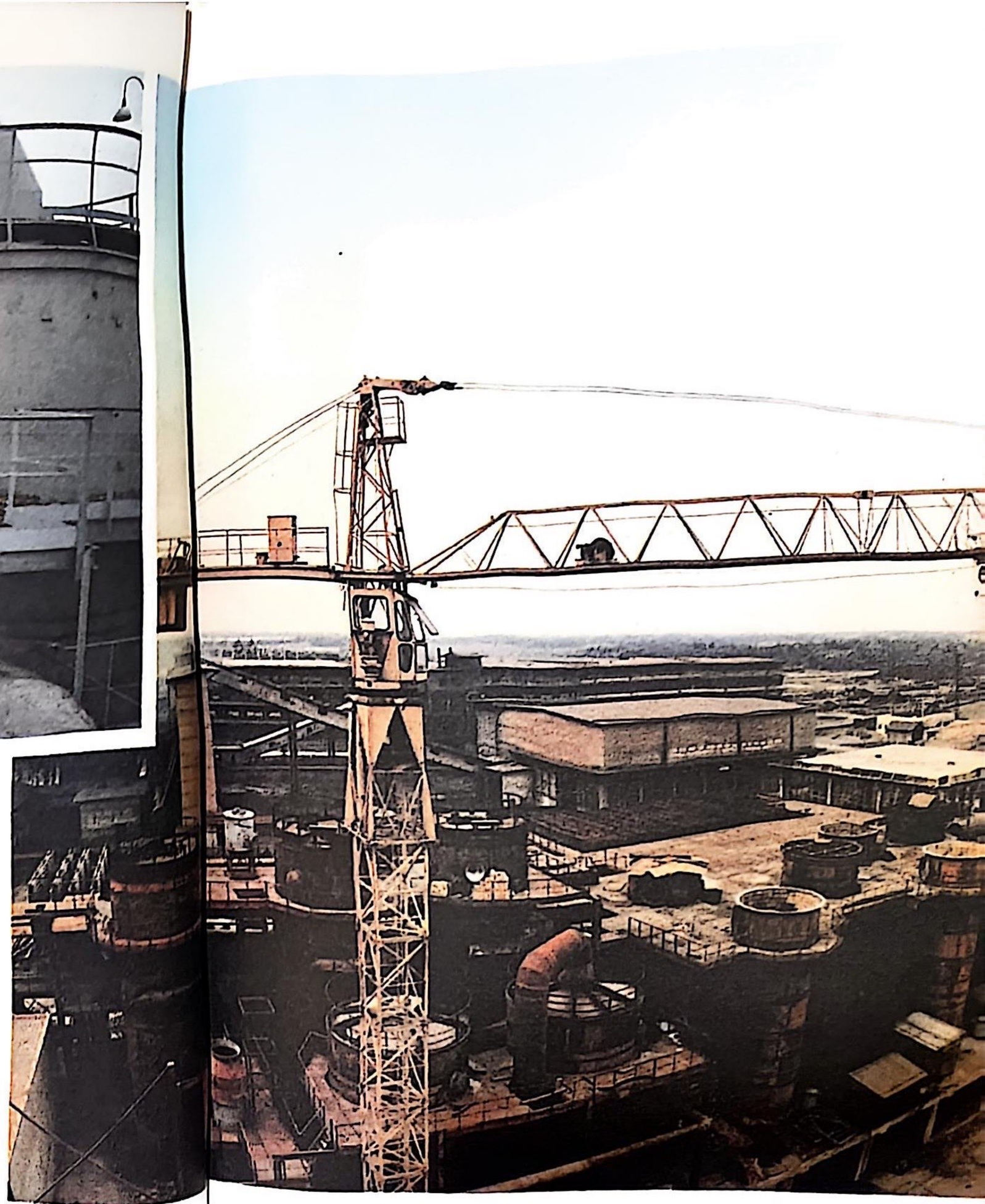
A partial view of the Pha Lai project.

A Soviet Party and Government delegation headed by Geidar Aliyev attended the commissioning ceremony of the first section of the Pha Lai power station.

Soviet specialists help Vietnamese engineers build a diesel-engine plant in Quo Dam.

Inside a shop of the Quo Dam plant, whose products are eagerly awaited by shipbuilders and workers of many new factories and power stations in Vietnam.

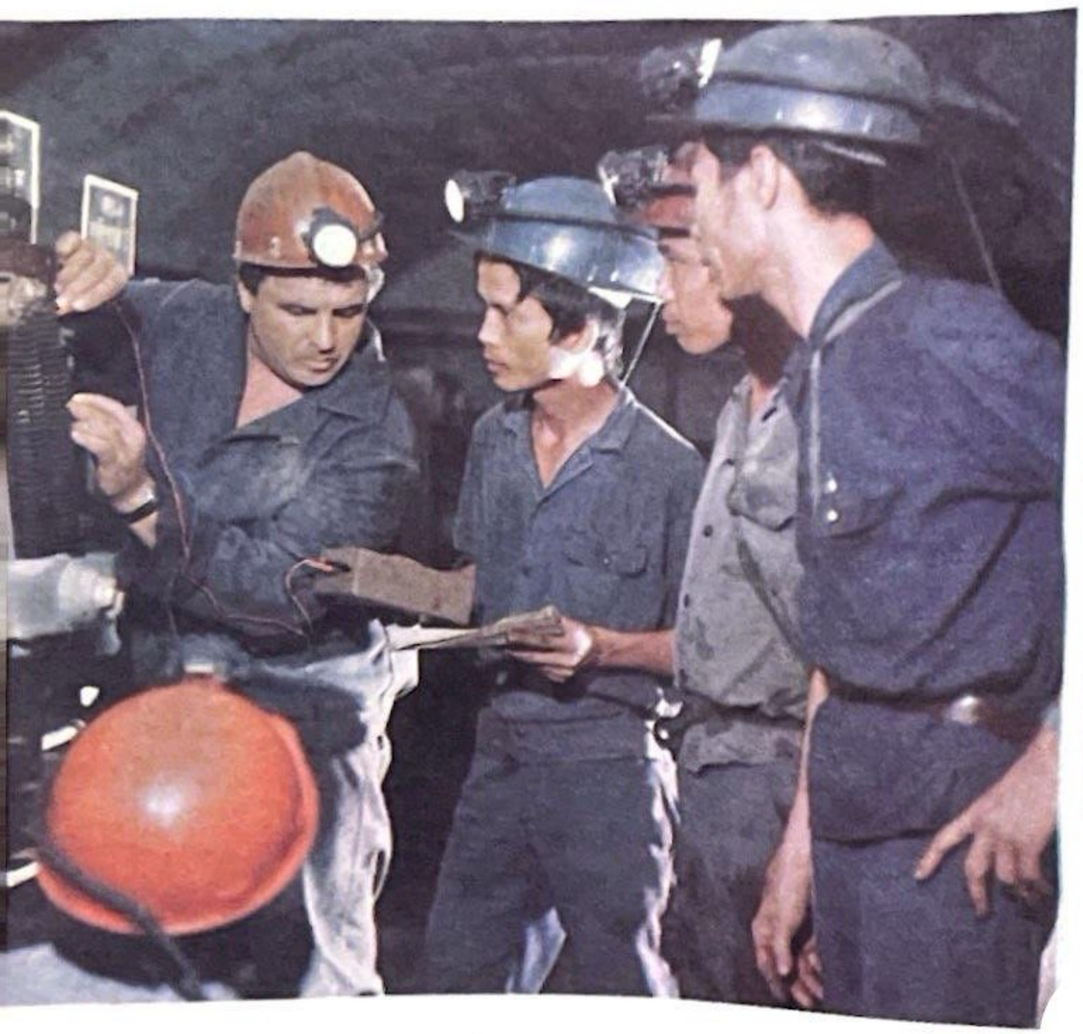


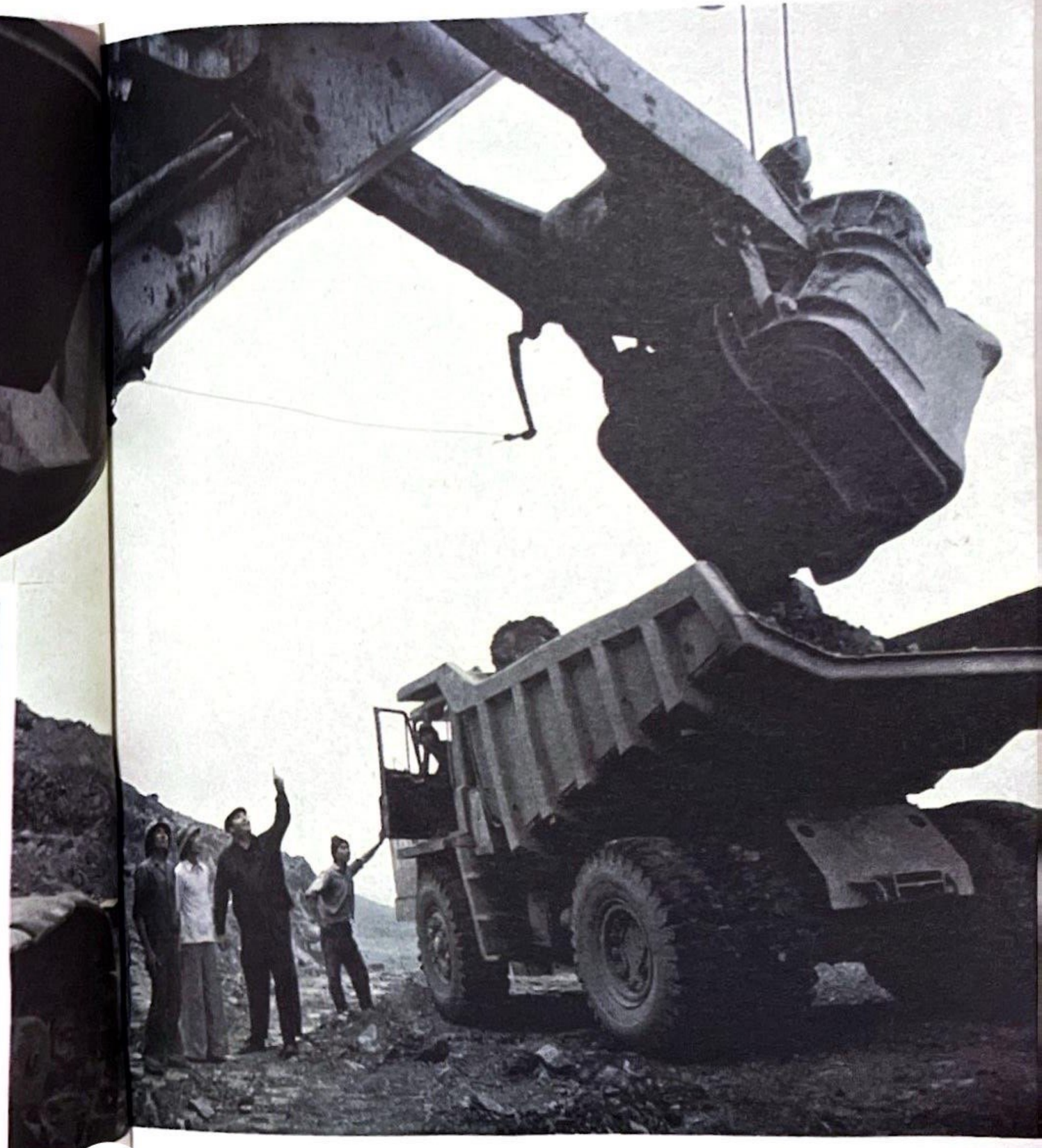


The superphosphate works in Lam Thao, being built with Soviet assistance. It will produce annually 300,000 tons of much needed fertilizer and raw material for the chemical industry.

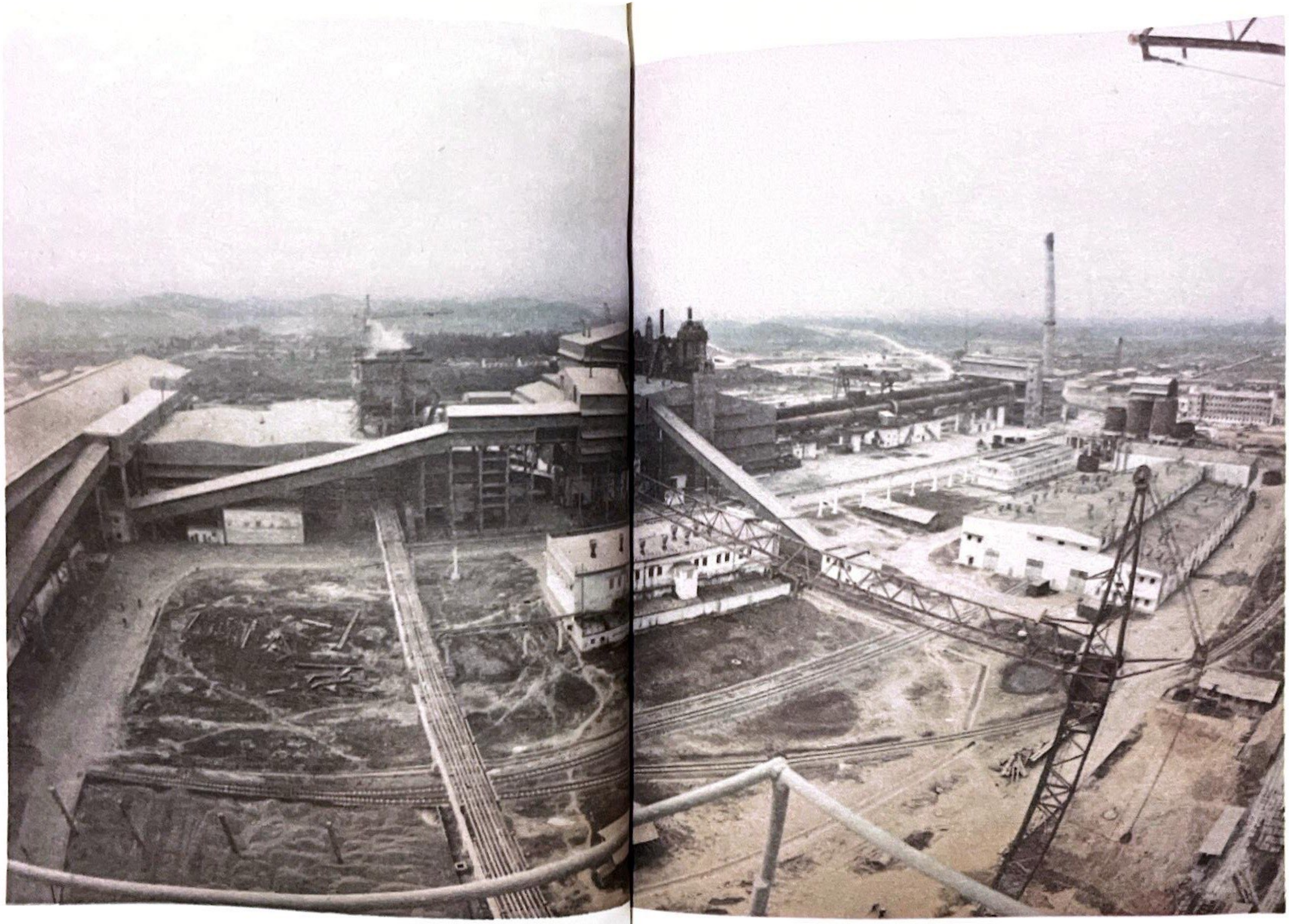
Cotton raising is a fast-growing branch of the Vietnamese economy. Soviet experts help to improve its efficiency.

Soviet specialists help to install automatic equipment at the Mong Duong colliery.

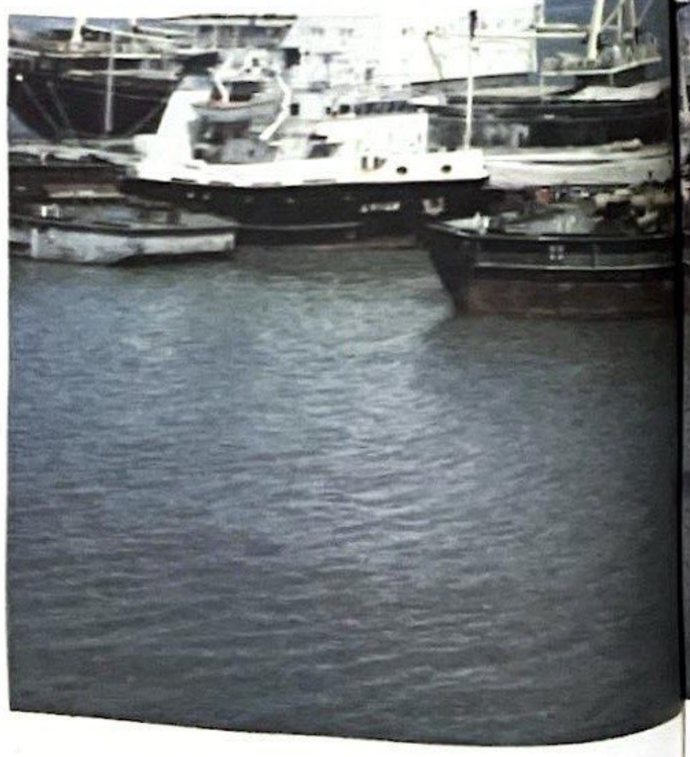




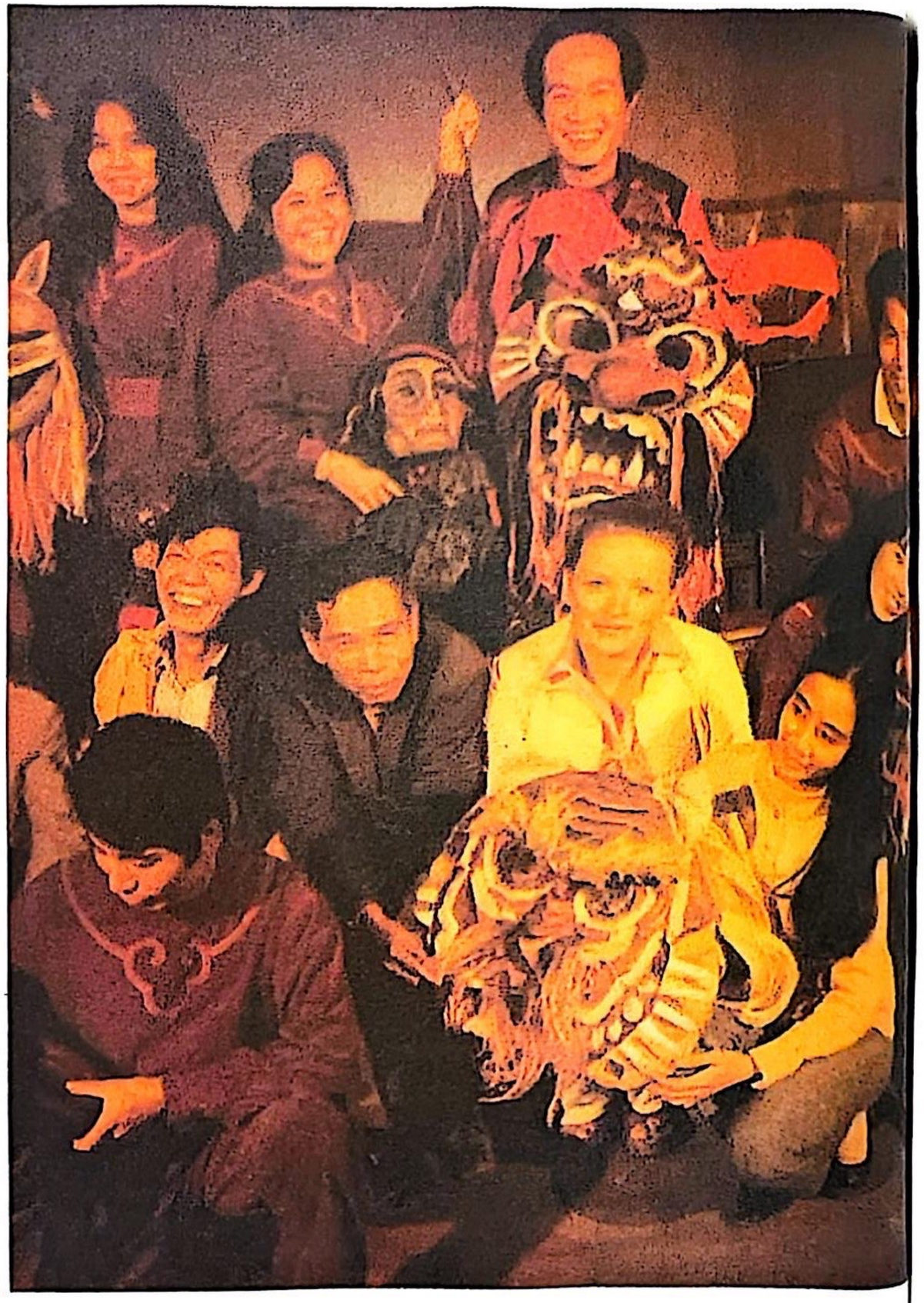
Powerful earth-moving equipment and Byelorussian-made dump trucks help to speed up construction of the Hoa Binh hydropower station.



The cement works in Bim Son will have an annual capacity of 1.2 million tons.



Vung Tau, the coastal base of the joint Vietnamese-Soviet *Vietsovpetro* enterprise which prospects for oil and gas on the continental shelf of southern Vietnam.



Cultural cooperation between the Soviet Union and socialist Vietnam is many-sided and fruitful. Photo: Soviet art director Galina Khanina (centre) among her hosts, members of the Hanoi Puppet Theatre.

jungle. But these two hydropower plants are alike in that both were built with dedicated efforts and our station is as vitally important for the Kolyma area as the Thac Ba station is for Vietnam. One can hardly overestimate the significance of the Kolyma hydropower station for the Magadan Region, one of the most rigorous and remote parts of the Soviet Union, where many branches of the national economy are now developing at a fast rate."

"It has been quite some time since I returned from Vietnam, but Vietnam remains in my heart," Valentin Avdeyev continued. "The working people of the Magadan Region follow with interest the activities and successes of the fraternal Vietnamese people. We know that our country is giving more assistance to Vietnam, that new, much more bigger hydropower stations are being built there and that Soviet designers, engineers and workers are helping to build them. I wish all my Vietnamese colleagues new successes. May the light created by their hands, the light of our friendship, shine over the land of fraternal Vietnam!"

"When we began designing the Thac Ba hydropower station," recalls Adil Zeinalov, one of the designers, "we were well aware of the importance of Vietnam's first hydropower plant for that country. We proudly pronounced the project's name, for Thac Ba was to us an embodiment of the friendship binding our peoples. Fulfilment of the Vietnamese order was entrusted to the best engineers with extensive experience in designing hydropower projects. Thousands of drawings for Thac Ba were being flown from Moscow to Hanoi. Vietnamese specialists were being trained in the USSR at the same time. After three years of practical training they returned home and joined the project builders."

When Adil Zeinalov came to Vietnam in 1963 he saw for himself the enthusiasm with which the Vietnamese

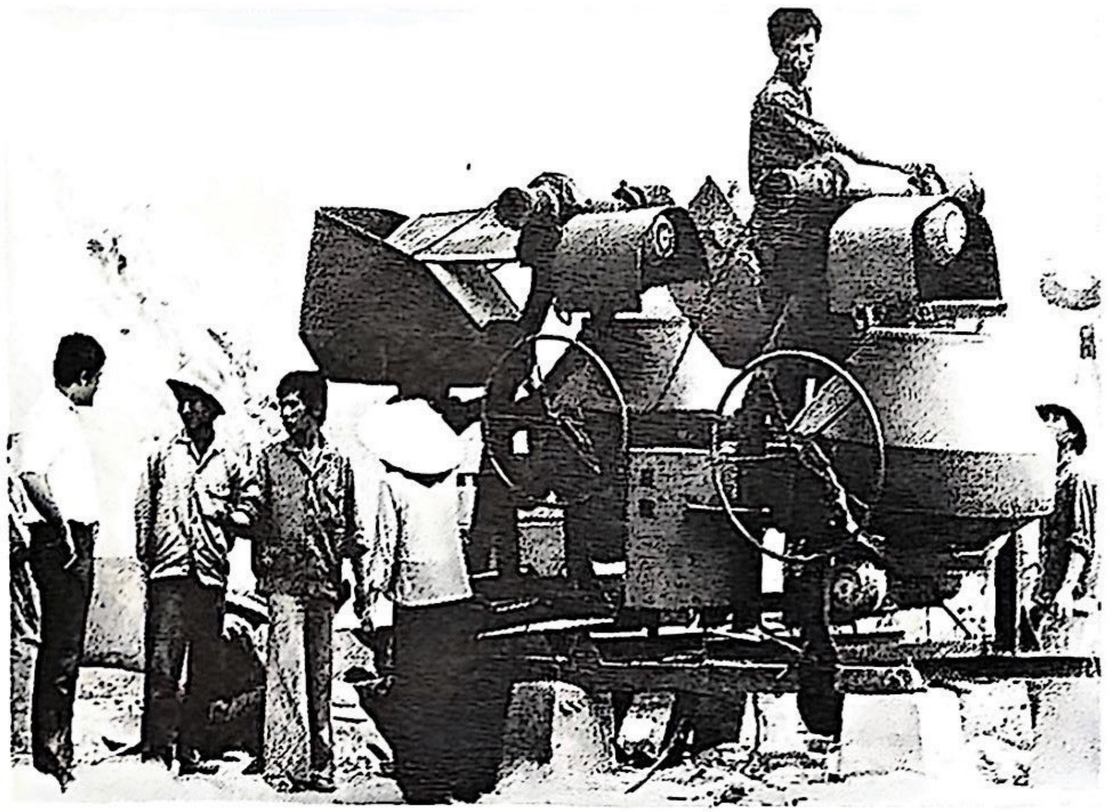
workers built the dam and dikes, service blocks and the power-house. The group of Soviet designers working in Vietnam soon became acclimatized, and besides supervising the construction they gave consultations to their colleagues and delivered lectures.

Cooperation between hydropower engineers of the

Soviet and Vietnamese engineers discussing their work plans at one of the construction sites of the Hoa Binh hydropower project.

two countries continues. Soviet and Vietnamese engineers had walked scores of kilometres along the banks of the Black River in search of a suitable site for the dam of the Hoa Binh hydropower station. That was an extremely complicated task since the weir which would stop the flow of the river's waters and thus create a 200-kilometre long water reservoir had to be erected in an

area with very difficult geological and climatic conditions. In the opinion of experts no other hydropower plant and water reservoir have ever been built in such complicated conditions. The tropical climate, the high seismicity, the loose ground forming the bottom of the Black River, were only some of the problems that faced



Soviet specialists help yesterday's soldiers of the People's Liberation Army of Vietnam learn builders' trades.

the builders. By the time the designing began Vietnam already had skilled national personnel in the field of hydraulic engineering.

Hoa Binh is a typical example of deepening Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation. Nearly 400 Soviet specialists are working at its construction site and Soviet turbines will be installed in its machine hall. The Trian hydropower

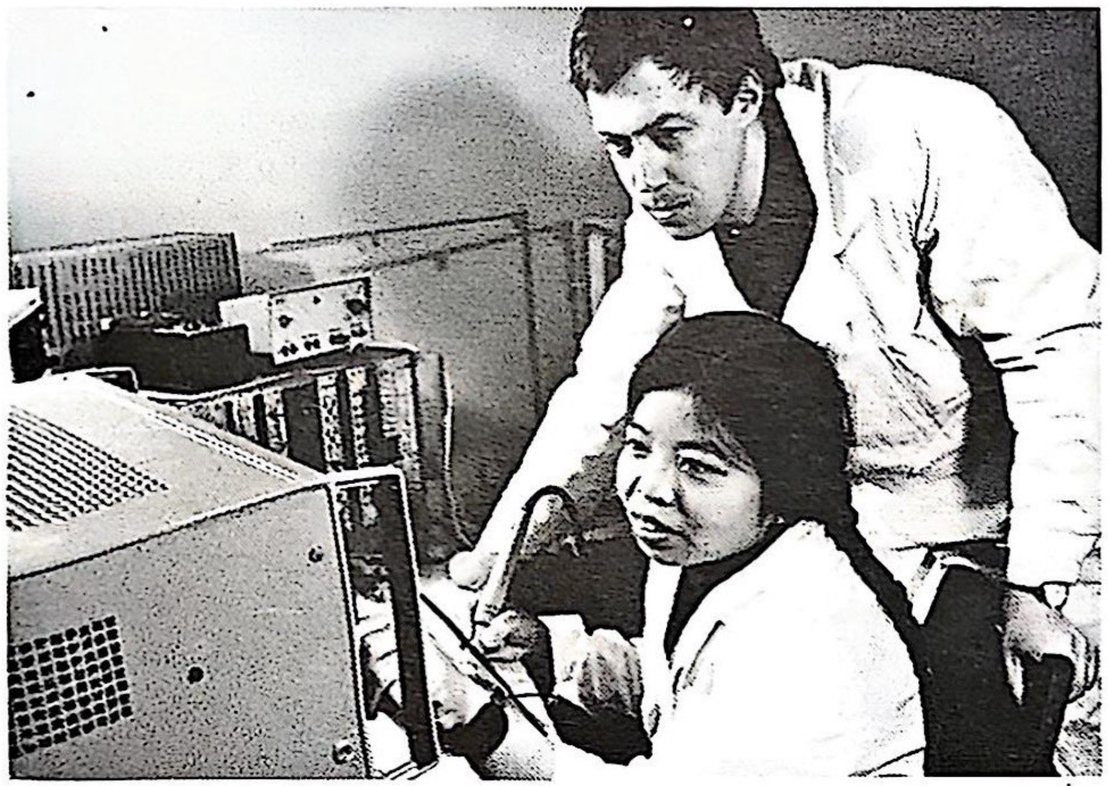
station with a 400,000-kw capacity to be built near Ho Chi Minh City is a major power project in the southern part of Vietnam. In view of the shortage of electricity in that part of the republic the Soviet Union and Vietnam have adopted a programme for speeding up its construction. The programme will also solve several other problems, including the irrigation of 280,000 hectares of land. The hydropower project has been worked out jointly by Soviet and Vietnamese designing organizations.

Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation continues also in the construction of power transmission lines and substations in various provinces of the republic and in drawing up a general plan for the development of the SRV's power industry up to 1990, including the setting up of a control centre to maintain constant supervision over the functioning of the country's single power grid.

...We were driving from Hanoi, past hills covered with browned shrubbery, emerald-green rice fields, banana groves and neat little provincial towns. This is what Pha Lai, one of hundreds of the republic's district towns, was like only recently. It had actually to be moved several kilometres away to give place to the vast construction site occupying 335 hectares. But the residents of Pha Lai did not mind that; in fact the town and the whole Hai Hung province are proud of having given the name to the famous project. Any local boy will tell you that it was here, on these very fields and hills, that foreign invaders were routed in the Middle Ages by Vietnamese fighters led by the celebrated generals Le Long and Nguyen Trai. And he will add that today a new page in the history of Vietnam is being written in Pha Lai.

The top of the smoke stack of the thermal power station can be seen many kilometres away and is a landmark for drivers.

Back in Hanoi I asked my Vietnamese friends why that particular place had been chosen for the power station. They got out a map which shows that Pha Lai is only 80 kilometres from Hanoi on the one side and from the major seaport of Haiphong on the other. The river Thai Binh will supply the power station with the required



During practical training at the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research at Dubna near Moscow.

amount of fresh water. There are good roads in the area and also waterways suitable for transport vessels. The Hai Hung province is very near the Hon Gai coalfields which will supply fuel to the power plant. And, finally, Pha Lai's being situated in the centre of North Vietnam will cut the cost of connecting the electric station to the republic's power grid.

Dang Ngoc Tung, manager of the power station, told

me in Pha Lai that its energy would raise the productivity of enterprises in the Hanoi and Haiphong industrial areas, help develop irrigation systems in the Hai Hung and neighbouring provinces and sharply increase their industrial and farm output, especially the production of rice (by many thousands of tons), and give the long-awaited light to nearby towns and villages.

Dang Ngoc Tung is a power engineer who until recently was chief engineer and then manager of the Uong Bi thermal electric power station built with Soviet assistance. He said that his work at Uong Bi, which is today the country's biggest thermal power plant, and the education he received at the Power Institute in Moscow, where he wrote his Candidate of Technical Sciences thesis, would be very useful in Pha Lai. The subject of his thesis, "Optimization of Operating Power Systems", is a highly topical one in Vietnam today.

"Pha Lai is called a Vietnamese-Soviet friendship project in our country," the plant manager said. "From the very beginning, when survey and design work was being carried out by the Rostov branch of the Atomteploelektroproekt designing institute, to the present strenuous days, when the construction is nearing completion, during all these many months Vietnamese and Soviet builders have been working shoulder to shoulder, jointly tackling all problems and overcoming all difficulties and sharing the joy of achievement. The more than 300 specialists who have come to Pha Lai from various Soviet republics realize the significance of the project for our homeland and have been making a great contribution to the work of the 16,000-strong contingent of builders. Thanks to the joint headquarters which supervises all aspects of the construction work, the main structures are being completed on schedule and ahead of schedule. A broad international socialist

emulation drive is under way at the project, whose participants also seek to fulfil their assignments ahead of time."

Pha Lai has become a real school for Vietnamese specialists in various fields of power engineering. For instance, Nguyen Van Lai is an operator at the pumping station supplying water for the boilers of the power plant. His relatives breed pigs and buffaloes and grow vegetables and rice in the nearby village of Ngo Quyen. "And I am going to be a power specialist," Nguyen Van Lai says with pride.

He has chosen an occupation which is extremely prestigious in Vietnam today.

The Warmth of Sunny Azerbaijan

The sky clears up and a bright sun shines upon the bay. The pearly morning mist has dispersed. The houses and streets seem to be freshly washed by the sea. From a park situated high in the hills green terraces descend to the horse-shoe shaped boulevard running for several kilometres along the azure bay. Baku, the capital city of Soviet Azerbaijan, one of the fifteen republics of the Soviet Union, is slowly awakening.

Azerbaijan lies in the south of the European part of the Soviet Union, in a region known as Transcaucasia. It is a land of flowering valleys and snow-clad mountains, where the skies are always blue, and the Caspian Sea can be both very calm and very rough, a land of petrochemists and sheep farmers, machine builders and fishermen, cotton growers and metal makers. But above all Azerbaijan is famous for its oil.

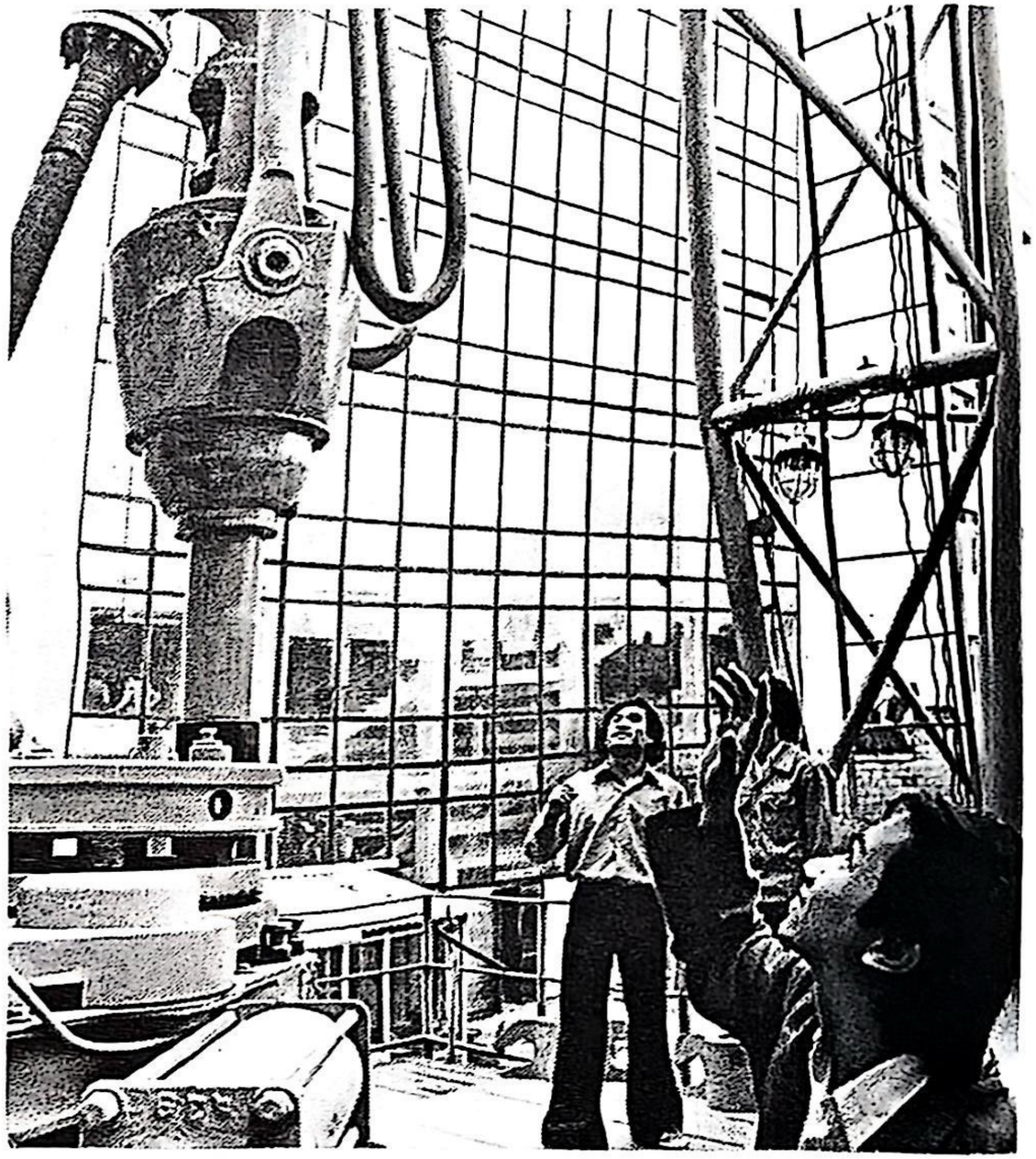
The first oil well was drilled in Baku more than a hundred years ago. After the 1917 October Revolution Baku became the main source of oil supply for the young Soviet republic, and it provided the bulk of petroleum fuel during the Second World War and in the years of postwar economic rehabilitation. Baku remains an industrial centre today despite the fact that vast new resources of oil and gas have been discovered in other parts of the Soviet Union. New industries are developing rapidly in the country's oldest oil-producing centre, including machine building, power engineering, electronics, metal making and the chemical industry. As for Baku oil, most of it is now extracted from wells drilled in the bottom of the Caspian where more and more deposits are being found. The tapping of undersea oil and gas deposits is as promising line of development of thermal power engineering in the Soviet Union as in all other industrial countries.

In the summer of 1980 the Soviet Union and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam signed an agreement on cooperation in prospecting for oil and gas on the continental shelf of southern Vietnam. Under the agreement a joint enterprise, *Vietsovpetro*, was set up in the city of Vung Tau, and among its staff members were specialists from Soviet Azerbaijan with their vast experience in extracting oil from the seabed. Soviet builders, assembly men and oil workers came to the SRV in 1982.

A group of Vietnamese oil workers arrived in Baku for practical training. I met their leader, Vu Ngoc An, Candidate of Technical Sciences, at the offices of the Azneft Production Amalgamation where a lively discussion was going on in Russian of various questions concerning the training programme.

After the discussion I said to Vu Ngoc An: "You have a fine command of Russian and seem to know Baku quite well."

"I consider myself a Baku man," he said with a smile. "I have spent nearly ten years in this city. In 1972 I graduated from the Azerbaijan Oil and Chemistry



Learning to handle a drilling rig at the Azerbaijan Oil and Chemistry Institute in Baku.

Institute named after Azizbekov and then did postgraduate studies there. Then I worked for several years in Vung Tau, the centre of our country's young oil industry. Azerbaijani specialists are highly respected there."

Oil workers from Azerbaijan work together with their Vietnamese colleagues many of whom have been trained in Azerbaijan and other cities in the Soviet Union. Nearly 300 young Vietnamese men and women have graduated from the Azerbaijan Oil and Chemistry Institute, specializing in various branches of the oil and gas industry, petrochemistry, the economics of the oil industry, the operation of oil-extracting equipment, etc.

Specialists for the SRV are trained not only at Soviet colleges. Scores of Vietnamese welders, electricians and assemblers have received on-site training in Azerbaijan by learning to operate permanent platforms for extracting oil out in the sea. They are now working in their own country. More groups of Vietnamese workers, technicians and engineers continue to improve their skill in Baku where they study the experience of Azerbaijani specialists at oil fields, in repair shops, laboratories and factories. Soviet experts and workers readily share their knowledge with them and help them in every way.

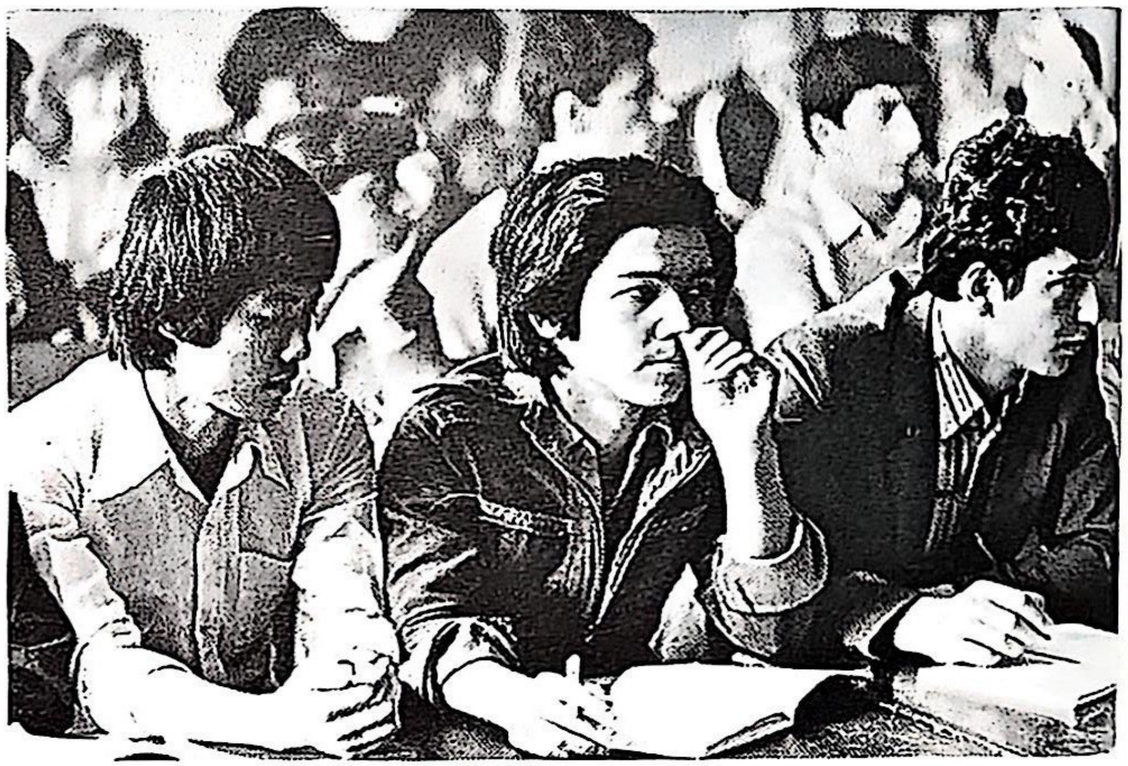
"From the very first day of our arrival here our Azerbaijani friends have been helping us in every way," said engineer Le Dung, a recent graduate of the Azerbaijan Oil and Chemistry Institute. "We constantly feel their warm and sincere concern for us."

The Azerbaijan Oil and Chemistry Institute named after Meshadi Azizbekov, one of the legendary 26 Baku commissars, is one of the republic's leading institutions of higher learning. The Red Banner of the Institute bears several Soviet orders and other decorations. Recently it has been awarded the Order of Friendship of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for its great services in training oil specialists for the fraternal country.

Most of the Vietnamese students at the institute are enrolled in its geology-prospecting department, one of the institute's oldest. And this is not surprising.

"At this stage," said Nguyen Nao Kuong, a postgraduate student, "our country badly needs geologists and geophysicists for exploring Vietnam's mineral

wealth and putting it to use for the benefit of the people. Here we have an opportunity to learn the latest techniques of prospecting for minerals both on land and at sea. This is particularly important because many of us will be working on the continental shelf of Vietnam where the joint Soviet-Vietnamese enterprise



Students from socialist Vietnam in a college lecture hall in Azerbaijan.

Vietsovpetro is making its first steps. We think it is significant that there are many Baku specialists among those who are helping Vietnam make these first steps."

I recall the speech made by the leader of the Vietnamese community in Baku at a meeting during which the institute was presented the Order of Friendship.

"When we go home for vacations," he said, "our relatives and friends and the institute's former graduates would ask us about our studies and life in Baku. And we

tell them with pride that we feel at home on Azerbaijani soil and always feel the warmth of this land, the sincere concern of its people."

The Azerbaijani branch of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society in Baku is among the most active in the Soviet Union. Azerbaijan and Vietnam are linked by close economic ties. Azerbaijan delivers to the SRV oil equipment, electric motors, steel pipes, high-voltage equipment, air conditioners, chemicals and petroleum products. For example, the Baku Engineering Works, which is a collective member of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society, has been sending its goods to Vietnam for the last ten years and more. During the five-year period which ends this year the plant has broadened nearly twofold the range of goods manufactured for the fraternal country.

"Our activists number six million," said Abdulla Ibragimov, chairman of the republican branch of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society, a prominent lawyer and a department head of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan. "Yes, the whole population of our republic! The movement for solidarity with Vietnam is extremely popular among the Azerbaijanis. The numerous rallies held under the slogan 'Hands off Vietnam!' were attended by thousands of people, and workers and specialists would work for days on end so that they could fulfil orders from the heroic republic as quickly as possible. Azerbaijani youngsters tried to get to Vietnam to help defend it from the aggressors, while old people contributed their savings to the fund set up to help the fraternal people. The roots of this movement, I think, lie in the age-long traditions of our people combined with a feeling of proletarian internationalism which has been instilled in all Soviet people by the socialist system, by our Communist Party."

The chairman of the republican branch of the Friendship Society has twice visited Vietnam. The first time he went there in 1965 as a member of the International Committee to Investigate American Imperialist War Crimes. What he saw there was a shock even to him, a man who had seen a great deal in his life. On his return Abdulla Ibragimov spoke at many meetings at factories, collective and state farms, schools and colleges. When he showed his audience samples of cluster bombs, fragments of rockets and albums of photographs he saw a look of indignation appear on the faces of his listeners and heard their angry cries: "Shame on the aggressors! Peace to Vietnam!"

He made his second trip to Vietnam after long-awaited peace had come to that country and the victorious people had started building socialism in their reunited land. Again he spoke at meetings on his return, and though he now spoke not about war crimes but about the achievements of the Vietnamese people in rebuilding and developing the country's economy and about the Vietnamese people's gratitude to the Soviet people for their assistance in the struggle, he always brought to the meetings the same fragments of rockets and photograph albums as a reminder that the victory was not an easy one, that the Vietnamese people remembered this and the Soviet people also should not forget it. Our assistance and support, our friendship and sympathy, he would point out, are needed no less today than before by the working people of the reunited country who are successfully marching along the socialist road despite all the obstacles set up by the imperialists and their helpers.

"Love for the Vietnamese people and admiration of their valour and heroism, self-sacrifice and staunchness will forever live in our hearts, and these feelings will be

transmitted to our children and grandchildren, to all future generations," said Abdulla Ibragimov.

Many people in Azerbaijan share Ibragimov's feeling of solidarity with Vietnam.

Take for instance Agali Gussein Ogly, a fitter at the Kasimov engineering works, who fulfilled three to four

Another product of the Baku dry-type transformer plant will be used at a thermal power station in Vietnam.

daily work quotas and gave his earnings to the Vietnamese people in 1979, during the production campaign in solidarity with the Vietnamese people who came under the attack of the Chinese hegemonists. Gabil Imamverdiev, winner of the Azerbaijan State Prize, devoted to the heroic republic's victory over the US imperialists a poem called "Vietnam" which has been included into school textbooks. Dr. Pyusta Azizbekova, a

historian, discovered in one of the issues of the newspaper *Baku Worker* for February 1927 Ho Chi Minh's article "French Colonialism Is Doomed," which was being published for the first time and appeared under the

Film director Azhdar Ibragimov (centre) with Vietnamese film makers at the International Film Festival of Asian and African Countries (Tashkent, 1982).

pen-name Nguyen Huo Van. People's Artist of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic Azhdar Ibragimov, the prominent film director, has taken an active part in establishing Vietnam's national cinema.

A visitor to Azhdar Ibragimov's house is immediately aware of the film-maker's close association with Vietnam. There are straw mats and lacquer pictures on the walls, Vietnamese wooden figurines on shelves, a massive ash-tray made of Hon Gai coal on the desk, and above it a photograph in a beautiful frame showing Azhdar Ibragimov next to Ho Chi Minh. This is what Ibragimov said about his work in Vietnam:

"I first went to Vietnam in 1959 to help our friends set up cinema studios of their own. My work began with a trip around the country. It was necessary to select personnel, find suitable students for a film school and in general to observe the life of the people on the spot. I first met Comrade Ho Chi Minh just before our trip. He greeted me, according to custom, at the gates to his house in spite of the heavy rain. As we walked along the path leading to the house under an umbrella Uncle Ho was studying my face with interest and I felt somewhat embarrassed. Ho Chi Minh noticed it immediately. 'Don't be embarrassed,' he said with a friendly smile. 'I wish to know who is going to teach our young people the art of film making, an art which is so badly needed by our country. So I would like to find out, even before our talk, what kind of person you are, what lies behind your appearance. Please don't take offense.'

"I assured him that that was all right with me and hastened to change the subject. We had a long talk then. Busy as he was the President asked me many questions about my life and my artistic plans and gave me much useful advice. 'We need film makers who are devoted to the cause of the revolution,' he said emphatically. 'We have many such people. The most talented of them should be selected. A tremendous amount of work lies ahead of you, but our comrades will help you in every way. And should you need my help, don't hesitate to ask me.'

"I met Ho Chi Minh many times in the three years I spent there, and each meeting was a memorable occasion. President Ho was a man of great wisdom and great charm. We spoke about politics, economics, art and most of all about films, of course. Ho Chi Minh had a pro-

Vietnamese film director Tran Van Thu with the prize awarded to him by the Committee of Youth Organizations of the USSR for his film *Father and Son* at the International Film Festival of Asian and African Countries (Tashkent, 1980).

found knowledge of cinema and had his own original views about every film he had seen."

Those were the years when peace finally came to Vietnam and its people worked tirelessly to build a new society, inspired by the bright prospects of socialism that

had opened up before them. For Ibragimov they were years of hard but rewarding work. He delivered lectures, taught actors and did some film shooting himself. Then came the day when he was to return home, having completed his assignment. Just before his departure Ho Chi Minh firmly shook his hand and said: "Remember you are always welcome in our country."

Azhdar Ibragimov brought out a photo album and slowly leafed through it. There are the familiar places there: Ba Ding Square, Ha Long Bay, the Ham Rong bridge. Here is a group of soldiers in steel helmets, their faces grim and strained, for they have just repulsed an air attack. Among them one can see Ibragimov with a camera in his hands. This was during his second visit to Vietnam, in 1967, when its people were defending their country against the US aggressors. In 1976, after the victory, Azhdar Ibragimov came to Ho Chi Minh City. The first to greet him at Tan Son Nhat Airport were his former students: script writer and director Thuy Van, the actresses Ngoc Lam and Tra Giang, director Pham Hieu Dan and cameraman Han Du, whose works had won great popularity and been awarded prizes at various international film festivals. Vietnamese cinematography has made great strides in recent years.

"I have many friends in Vietnam," the Azerbaijani film director said in conclusion. "We write to each other and sometimes we meet. So the dear faraway country is never very far from me. Of course I am also reminded of it by the high decorations of the Vietnamese government, the Order of Labour and the Medal of Friendship, which I am proud to wear. I congratulate my friends on their every success and today especially I want to send them my heartfelt greetings on a wonderful holiday—the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the workers' and peasants' state on Vietnamese soil."

Greetings from the Neva Banks

Autumn days in Leningrad tend to be misty and grey. From early morning the city was shrouded in a haze and the golden needle of the Admiralty could barely be seen against a leaden sky. But when I came to the Kirov plant at midday the fog had lifted, the clouds dispersed and the windshields of the orange-coloured Kirovets tractors lined up in the yards sparkled in the sun. It was more like summer than autumn.

"Just like on that day, isn't it?" asked Ivan Zakharov, leader of a fitters' team and Hero of Socialist Labour.

I well remember that day, a memorable one for all workers at the plant, July 13, 1973, when the plant received a Vietnamese Party and Government delegation led by Comrades Le Duan and Pham Van Dong. Thousands of workers and office personnel gathered in the sun-flooded factory grounds. There I made Zakharov's acquaintance: I was among the newsmen accompanying the delegation while Ivan together with the plant manager presented to the Vietnamese leaders a small model of the K-700, a famous tractor even at that time.

The delegation of the Vietnam Workers' Party and the DRV Government came to the Soviet Union soon after the people of Vietnam had won the historic victory in their long and fierce struggle for freedom and independence. The Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam had been signed in Paris, and the last US soldier had left Vietnamese soil. Soon the country would be completely liberated and reunited as a single state. On that summer day, and throughout the period of the visit, Soviet people heard many words of gratitude for their support and solidarity, for their fraternal assistance to the Vietnamese people in their struggle and in labour.

"The Vietnamese people are constantly and profoundly aware," Comrade Le Duan said at the meeting in Leningrad, "that all their victories are inseparably linked with the support and assistance given to them by the Soviet people, including the people of the heroic city of Lenin. Leningraders have ardently supported and helped the fighting Vietnamese people, thus demonstrating a spirit of proletarian internationalism as befits people who have carried out the October Revolution, displaying a profound understanding characteristic of those who have made countless sacrifices in the struggle for their homeland's freedom. This has been and is being manifested in the movement of solidarity with Vietnam, which is continuously developing and broadening among all sections of the city's population and is acquiring most diverse and moving forms. This is manifested in the manufacturing by skilled and efficient workers of Leningrad and by its scientists those goods which go to Vietnam and in the daily concern and cordial feelings on the part of Soviet teachers and instructors with regard to the young men and women from Vietnam studying in Leningrad."

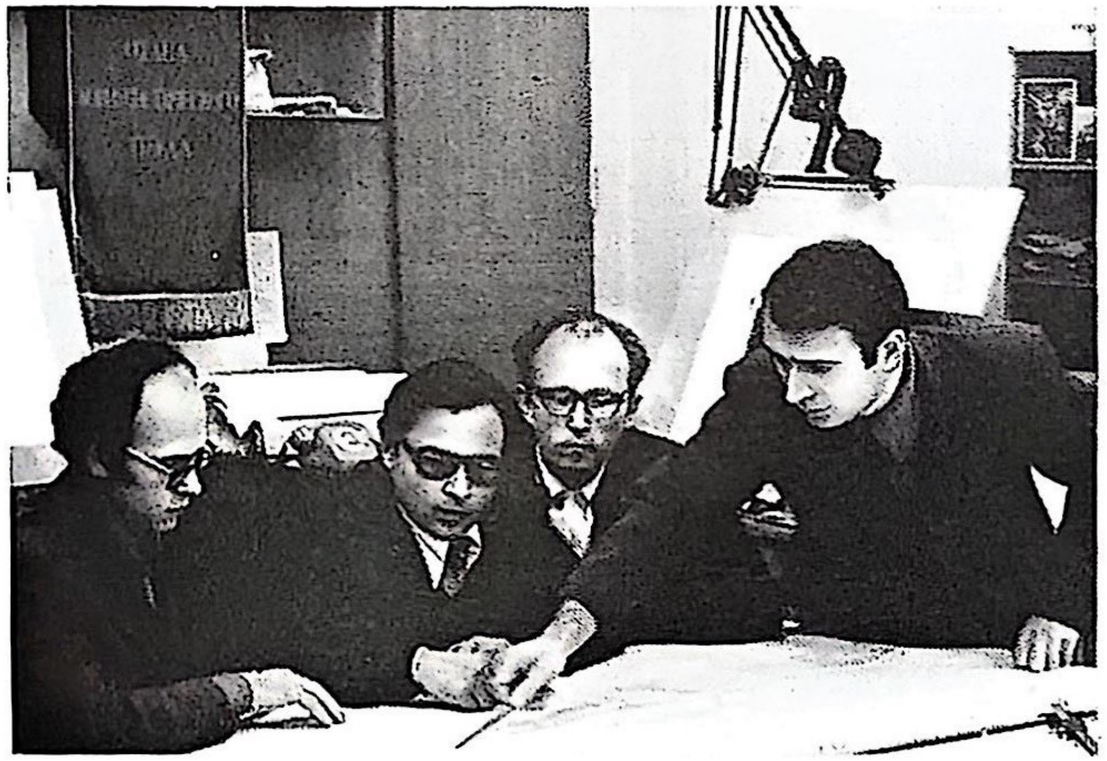
The changing specifications of orders from Vietnam tell Leningraders that the economy of socialist Vietnam has gained strength and is developing at a greater pace and therefore needs more powerful and sophisticated machines and equipment. For example, if earlier the Elektrosila plant in Leningrad manufactured a 100,000 kilowatt turbogenerator for the Pha Lai thermal power station, the capacity of the generating units designed in Leningrad for the Hoa Binh hydropower station reached 240,000 kilowatts.

The Sverdlov machine-tool plant has become a university for Vietnamese workers of various trades. A large group of young machine operators from Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Haiphong, Hue and other towns have undergone practical training at the plant. The training sessions are conducted by prominent Soviet specialists. "Thank you for your noble internationalism, for your active and very effective assistance," the Vietnamese workers wrote on completing their training.

More than 400 young men and women from Vietnam are enrolled in 23 educational establishments in Leningrad, which for several years becomes their home. They often speak at meetings and gatherings and tell Leningraders about the life of their people, their history, culture and art. Each year Leningrad schoolchildren take part in the quiz contest "What do you know about the twin city of Leningrad, Ho Chi Minh City?"

Leningraders remember that it was in their city that the leader of the Vietnamese people Ho Chi Minh first stepped on Soviet soil when he came to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1923. One of the new streets in a burgeoning industrial district of the city bears Ho Chi Minh's name.

That same year saw the foundation in Leningrad of the Giproshakht Institute, a leading Soviet centre for designing mining enterprises. The designing institute has played a key role in the development of the Soviet coal-mining industry which holds first place in the world in coal output. The institute in Leningrad has designed



The plans for building another colliery in socialist Vietnam being discussed at the Giproshakht designing institute in Leningrad.

hundreds of coal and shale mines, open pits and dressing plants.

Besides designing individual collieries the institute's engineers work out plans for developing whole deposits, which provide for the building of the necessary transport facilities, adequate energy and water supply, housing construction, etc. A subject of special pride for the staff of the Giproshakht Institute is the project for the Berezovsky open-cast colliery of the Kansk-Achinsk fuel-and-energy complex in Siberia. When completed, it

will be the world's biggest coal-mining enterprise with an annual capacity of 55 million tons.

Giproshakht engineers do a great deal of work for socialist countries, particularly for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. They have worked out designs for the reconstruction of the Vang Dang mine in the Kuang Ninh coal basin, which had been badly damaged during US bombing raids, and for the construction of the Mong Duong mine and several open-cast collieries in the same area. Soviet engineers took part in building many open-cut mines including Ha Tu, Deo Nai, Coc Sua, Cao Son and others. For several years a large group of the institute's designers have evolved a general plan for the development of the SRV's coal industry which is expected eventually to double its output.

Another Leningrad institute which maintains close ties with its Vietnamese counterparts is the Designing and Research Institute of the Nickel-Cobalt and Tin Industry (Gipronikel). Its engineers are working on the design of an ore-dressing plant near the town of Vinh in Vietnam. They have also drawn up plans for building a tin-smelting plant to produce metal both for meeting domestic needs and for export.

The Elektrik plant in Leningrad has shipped hundreds of thousands of welding machines and sets of equipment to Vietnam. Its transformers and automatic arc welders, generators and automatic hose sets, high-frequency converters and seam- and spot-welding machines are used to weld ship hulls machine parts, main-line gas pipes, steel frames of houses, and so on.

Before a newly-developed machine is shipped to the customer it is checked by the designing-and-experimental department of the plant.

"Here is where the new equipment is tested for the last time," says Yuri Filippov, the department's chief en-

A friendship meeting in honour of a visiting Vietnamese delegation at the Krasny Vyborzhets plant (Leningrad, September 1978).

gineer. "Equipment built for Vietnam undergoes a particularly thorough check. Look at the drawings. Each is marked with the letter 'T' which stands for 'tropical conditions'. It means that the given machine should operate faultlessly in hot and humid conditions, and this calls for special manufacturing techniques, varnishes and paints, insulation materials, and so on."

The Krasnogvardeyets plant, which is the Soviet Union's oldest and biggest manufacturer of medical equipment and instruments, supplies more than twenty different items to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The "suture appliance" is one of the items made at the plant's surgical-instrument shop. It consists of a large number of tiny parts and looks fragile—until you take it in your hand. Even a layman could feel that it is a reliable instrument, or more precisely a mechanism, which replaces the traditional surgeon's needle in even the most complicated cases. The appliance stitches up several tissues quickly, thus reducing the duration of an operation, and wounds heal more easily.

Suture appliances were first developed in the Soviet Union. They have been patented in many countries and are in great demand on the international market. Several types of them, including the one just described, are delivered to Vietnam.

Besides surgical instruments the Krasnogvardeyets plant manufactures for Vietnam devices which enable the doctor "to peer" into the patient's body and examine what earlier could be seen only by performing a complicated surgical operation.

The Krasnogvardeyets also supplies Vietnam with respirators, apparatus for measuring blood pressure and biochemical equipment for determining blood count and analyzing the cellular tissue of spinal marrow. Portable electrocardiographs help Vietnamese doctors to examine

patients on the spot. An apparatus for the artificial ventilation of lungs built in Leningrad is used during complicated operations.

Orchids are in bloom and many other tropical plants thrive in the hothouses of the Botanical Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Leningrad, protected from the cold rain and frosty wind outside by double windows which are hard to see through because of the drops of condensed moisture inside.

"As you can see, many samples of tropical and subtropical flora from Vietnam are adapting quite well in our climate," says Professor Gennadi Yakovlev, a prominent Soviet botanist. "Various kinds of fern and bamboo are in good condition as well as plane trees, palms and even flowers which are rarely found even in the Vietnamese jungle."

Professor Yakovlev has studied the plant life in both North and South Vietnam, and now observes the behaviour of his samples from that country in the artificial tropical conditions in Leningrad.

"The preparation of a fundamental scientific work, *The Flora of Vietnam*, is a major joint project of botanists from the two countries," continues Prof. Yakovlev. "It will take several years to write and will be of great importance for the development of the SRV's agriculture and environmental protection work and for organizing a network of national parks and wild-life reserves."

Under its plan of cooperation with Vietnam the Botanical Institute in Leningrad, a leading centre of world science, is helping to train Vietnamese botanists. The results of joint botanical expeditions are studied at its numerous laboratories.

"The Vietnamese people know much about Lenin and there are books about Lenin in every Vietnamese family. Our great leader Ho Chi Minh loved the land of Lenin,

the land of Great October. This is what he taught us, young people of Vietnam. And I am happy to study in a city bearing the name of the great leader of the proletariat." These lines are from the first composition written in Russian by Lai Van Dang, a student at vocational school No. 92 in Leningrad. His teacher, Yana Goryachaya, is quite satisfied with his progress.

Of the dozens of trades one can learn at the school Lai Van Dang, like most Vietnamese, is studying to become an electrician and a tool-setter.

Many groups of Vietnamese boys and girls have studied at School No. 92 in the last fifteen years. More than seven hundred of them have become skilled workers in shipbuilding, foundry work, forging and turning, and have returned home. But they have not lost contact with those who have taught them and given them every care and attention. These are not merely links between pupils and teachers but a union of people with a common world outlook.

The warmth of these relations can be seen in the hundreds of letters sent to the school by its former students who are now working in all parts of Vietnam and who remember their teachers with feelings of gratitude.

"The first groups of pupils from Vietnam came here when the war against the US aggressors was at its height," said Alexandra Khasina, who teaches at the school. "Some of them had come straight from the front and many had only recently recovered after being wounded in battle. We did everything to improve their health. I can say with pride that none of our pupils fell ill during the time they were here. I well remember Trinh Suan Ngoc. He graduated with honours and became a 4th-grade foundryman. His hobby was drawing and he was quite good at it. He painted a whole wall in my flat with

colourful Vietnamese flowers as a present on March 8, International Women's Day. Not long ago Ngoc sent us a letter saying that he was working at a metal-making plant built with Soviet aid and putting to good use the knowledge he had acquired at our school."

"People here care for us as for their own children and have provided us with the best possible conditions for study," say the Vietnamese students of vocational school No. 92. "How can we forget all that we have seen in the city of Great October, one of the most beautiful cities in the world, which bears the name of great Lenin!"

Friendship and Cooperation

The assembly line of the assembly shop No. 1 moves smoothly, without a hitch, and a cast-iron frame is being filled with more and more parts until it becomes a high-duty and all-purpose metal-cutting machine.

Thousands of such machines have been built at the Krasny Proletary plant in Moscow. Most of them have been awarded the Quality Mark, a pentagonal badge symbolizing the manufacturer's guarantee of the article's efficiency and durability. This can be confirmed by thousands of Soviet metal workers, for every third turner in the country operates a lathe built at Krasny Proletary, and also by workers in more than seventy countries where its machines are used, including the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

"We have been cooperating with Vietnamese machine-tool operators for 30 years," says Konstantin Gudalov, head of the plant's export department. "We have shipped thousands of machines to Vietnam during this period of time. Particularly popular in socialist Vietnam is the 16K20, our basic model, and its various modifications, which meet the highest requirements of both mass production and experimental machining."

I remember the two neat rows of fruit trees that line the main alley of the Hanoi Machine-Tool Plant, leading from the factory gate to the main production block. Some are tall and have rich foliage while others are quite young. Each tree has a small tag on which a name is written in Russian: A. Kuznetsov, A. Ilyukhin, V. Meshcheryakov, V. Kapustin, N. Pevtsov... At various times these Soviet men had worked at the factory built with Soviet help and each had planted a tree before going home. The first trees were planted by workers from the Krasny Proletary.

In 1955, the first year after the French colonialists were driven off Vietnamese soil, former soldiers whose tunics still smelled of gunpowder came to this Hanoi suburb to start building a plant of which one could not even dream in old Vietnam. Their enthusiasm vastly exceeded their skill. Hands that used to handle submachine guns now learned to handle the bricklayer's trowel, the carpenter's ax and the control levers of bulldozers and excavators. That was their new front, the front of building the national economy of socialist Vietnam.

Soon Soviet specialists came to their assistance, most of them from the Krasny Proletary. Alexei Kharlamov, an engineer, recalls:

"At the beginning we assembled equipment, then set up machine tools. In April 1958 the first freshly-painted drilling machines left the assembly shop. That was when Vietnam's machine-building industry was born. The machine builders were all our pupils, young Vietnamese workers, soldiers and navvies of yesterday."

Nguyen Hoang Thoan, who has been awarded the title of Hero of Labour, also remembers those years well:

"It wasn't easy, after working hard the whole day, to study in the evening and try to learn a new trade. But no one complained. It was a great joy for us to see the walls of the plant's shops go up and know that equipment was arriving from the Soviet Union. We, future machine builders, installed the equipment together with our Soviet comrades. Then we made the first machine tools ourselves. After drilling machines we learned to build lathes and milling machines... Our friends from the Krasny Proletary plant in Moscow were always at our side, ready to help us."

Meanwhile, Soviet designing bureaus were already working on more modern types of machine tools to meet the growing requirements of Vietnam's industry.

Work at the Hanoi machine-tool plant was disrupted, this time by a war unleashed by the United States against the young republic. The people of Vietnam rose to the defence of their country against US aggression. Many workers once again put on the soldier's uniform. Part of the plant was evacuated to the jungle, into mountain caves of remote provinces. I visited one such underground factory in Thanh Hoa province. I walked along the bay between two rows of machines operated by teenagers. In the dim light of the cave-shop one could see the familiar label on one of the machines: "Krasny Proletary Machine-Tool Plant, Moscow."

I also visited the half-deserted shops of the Hanoi plant. Again teenagers, members of the Young Communist League, were working there together with older workers, making things needed for the defence of the country. When air alarm sounded they went to the shelters in an organized manner, without any panic. As soon as the all-clear signal was given they calmly returned to their machines and continued working for the front.

It took several years after the victory to rebuild the plant. Again Hanoi workers worked shoulder to shoulder with specialists from the Krasny Proletary. And when the latter left for home more saplings were planted along the Friendship Alley.

Guests from Vietnam and Gherman Titov, a Soviet pilot-cosmonaut and chairman of the central board of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society, at the Krasny Proletary machine-tool plant in Moscow.

"Bonds of cooperation and brotherhood have linked the workers of our two plants for more than twenty years," said Boris Rasin, the plant's deputy chief production engineer and chairman of the plant's branch of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society of which the Krasny Proletary is an active collective member. "Both production and friendly ties between the two plants are growing stronger and deeper with each passing year. We

delivered 350 lathes to the fraternal republic in the last five-year period. We are pleased to know that Vietnamese workers and engineers are satisfied with them and find them highly efficient. It also gives us deep joy to know that machines carrying the label Krasny Proletary are helping to rehabilitate and develop the national economy of the republic which is building socialism. Our new machines for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam will be even more dependable and productive and easier to handle. They will incorporate the latest achievements of Soviet and world machine building. We have also helped our friends in Hanoi to train technical personnel. Each year groups of Vietnamese specialists come to the Krasny Proletary for practical training. The recent trips of our specialists to Hanoi have also proved very useful, for they were able to share their rich experience with their Vietnamese colleagues right at the work place."

Viktor Kapustin, a foreman of the tool-making shop, went to Vietnam with one of these groups.

"We were touched by the warmth and cordiality with which we were greeted everywhere in Vietnam," he recalled. "As for the Hanoi machine-tool plant, it became our second home. We were glad to meet again Vietnamese comrades who had had practical training at the Krasny Proletary, including foreman Tran Van Tong, who had been elected a Deputy to the SRV National Assembly."

"The Hanoi plant," Kapustin went on, "was being reborn in the sense that it was preparing to go over to the mass production of machine 16K20, the 'specialty item' of the Krasny Proletary. This involved major restructuring and modernization of the Hanoi plant, as had been the case with our plant in Moscow. New modern machines were being sent to Hanoi where production

was expanding and new processes were introduced. Vietnamese specialists, including Tran Van Tong, had seen for themselves how we built the 16K20 machines in Moscow, and now we came to Hanoi to share our knowledge and experience with them. Some of us did some work there. It was in Vietnam, for instance, that I made an unusual and complicated part which is now known among specialists as 'worm gear 14'. My colleagues helped me to sharpen the tools, prepare the pattern and set up the machine, and we made a device for a rice harvester which did the job of hundreds of farmers. Vietnamese newspapers publicized our work, calling it a major achievement of the visiting group of Soviet machine builders.

This was just one of many examples of how Soviet specialists during their stay in the SRV notably contributed to the development of machine building in Vietnam."

"The arrival of our friends, who were such excellent experts too," said Hero of Labour Nguyen Hoang Thoan, "was of exceptional significance for us. Such well-known Soviet lathe and milling machine operators as Viktor Krayushkin, Yuri Novikov and Nikolai Barykin demonstrated a skill which can justly be described as an art. My new friend Nikolai Barykin, a lathe wizard, soon won the affection of all of the plant's workers. Now he is in fact known throughout Vietnam as his photograph has been printed in our national newspaper *Nhan Dan*. His experience has been extensively used at our plant and will no doubt benefit many more thousands of machine-tool operators in Vietnam. Later I was very glad to meet him again in Moscow."

The long-standing friendship between the two plants was further strengthened during a production drive launched at the Krasny Proletary plant to mark an im-

portant event in the life of the Vietnamese people—the convening of the 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam. It took the form of ensuring fulfilment of orders for Vietnam ahead of time not only at the Krasny Proletary but also at related enterprises. The work force of the Krasny Proletary pledged to deliver high-duty machines to the SRV two months ahead of schedule by raising production efficiency and putting to better use the plant's own resources. The Moscow machine builders carried out their pledge and shipped to Vietnam 80 screw-cutting lathes ahead of schedule.

Specialists from the Krasny Proletary have also helped their friends in Hanoi to set up and operate a comprehensive quality-control system.

The Krasny Proletary has sent a complete set of furniture and other equipment for a kindergarten for 300 children to the sister plant in Vietnam.

After the 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, in March 1984, the banner of the Krasny Proletary was decorated with another high award, the Vietnamese Order of Friendship, in recognition of its great contribution to the advancement of machine building in the fraternal republic, to the strengthening of friendship between the two peoples. As is stressed by Sergei Sergeyev, secretary of the Krasny Proletary Party committee, for the plant's workers and other specialists this friendship has never been just a word, an idea, but has always meant something concrete and tangible.

A similar view is voiced by Vietnamese who have had practical training at the plant, in particular, Vietnamese students enrolled in the refresher department of the Ordzhonikidze Economic Management Institute in Moscow who have taken a comprehensive course of

training at the plant's shops, laboratories and departments. Le Suan Han, deputy head of the planning and economics department of Machine-Tool Plant No. 1 in Hanoi, Pham Van Binh, a production engineer at the mechanical works in Ho Chi Minh City, Nguyen Suan

Trainees from socialist Vietnam having a talk with Soviet engineers who had helped build the mechanical engineering works in Hanoi.

Lang, a mechanical engineer of the Technical Department of the Vietnamese government, and other Vietnamese specialists have spent two months at the Krasny Proletary.

"During our practical training at the Moscow plant," said Nguyen Suan Lang, "we learned about the latest techniques of production management and advanced work methods. The plant's specialists showed us how the integrated quality-control system at the Krasny

Proletary functioned, a system which can be successfully used in Vietnam. The experience we gained while working together with our Soviet colleagues is very valuable to us. The Party and government bodies of the SRV are paying great attention to raising the efficiency and quality of production. Production management is being improved and new incentives for better work are introduced in keeping with the latest decisions of the Communist Party of Vietnam on economic matters. The Party has pointed out the general direction, and in the course of our practical work to fulfil its decisions we can rely, in particular, on the experience of the Krasny Proletary."

"I have written a paper on the participation of working people in running production, summing up the results of the practical training course we had taken," Lang went on. "We had in our group engineers of different specialities—a production engineer, specialists in instrument-making and mechanics, and economists. Along with the general questions of production organization each of them concentrated on his particular field. Economist Le Suan Han, for instance, was especially interested in cost accounting within a production shop, which he thought could help his plant disclose new internal resources and raise labour productivity. I found much valuable material for my graduation paper on improved management of repair work at machine-building enterprises. I received much help from my colleagues, mechanical engineers of the Krasny Proletary, above all, Sergei Sergeyenko, deputy chief mechanic of the plant, who supervised my practical training.

"The plant's management was very kind and attentive to us, and we had long and interesting talks with the plant's manager Oleg Korolyov."

I found Innokenti Maltsev, Hero of Socialist Labour and a member of the central board of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society, at his work place, the control panel of a planer, a machine as big as a one-storey house.

He had heard a great deal about Vietnam from his colleagues who helped build the Hanoi machine-tool plant, the first project of Vietnam's machine-building industry. His first visit to that country was in 1970.

"I was deeply shocked," recalls the team leader, "by the devastation caused by enemy bombings and the suffering inflicted on people by the terrible war unleashed by the US imperialists."

Innokenti knows only too well what war is. His father left for the front in 1941 when the war against the Nazis broke out, to be followed by Innokenti's four elder brothers. None of them came back. Instead arrived death notifications, pieces of grey paper, briefly informing his mother that yet another of her sons had died fighting for the country...

So Innokenti Maltsev had seen Vietnam in the years of war and now he wanted very much to pay a visit to peaceful Vietnam. In 1980 he went to Hanoi again as a member of a Krasny Proletary delegation. There he signed an agreement on cooperation between Krasny Proletary and Machine-Tool Plant No. 1 in Hanoi. The agreement stipulated for the relations of friendship and mutual assistance between the leading machine-building enterprises of the two countries.

"From the bottom of my heart," said Innokenti Maltsev, "I wish to convey greetings to the workers of our sister plant, to all Vietnamese machine builders, from the work collective of the Krasny Proletary. Vietnam, its

aspirations, successes and problems have been close to us for many years. We have strong fraternal bonds with the faraway republic, with its people. We shall do everything to help the working people of the heroic republic in their confident advance along the socialist path."

Odessa Which Is So Near

When acacias are in bloom in Odessa the wind would sweep the white petals along a quiet green street named after Ton Duc Thang, an outstanding revolutionary and statesman of Vietnam.

The street may not be as broad and beautiful as the Ton Duc Thang Embankment in Ho Chi Minh City. But Odessans believe that their city has just as much right to have a street named after this loyal son of the Vietnamese people whose revolutionary activity began here, in Odessa.

The worker from Saigon was drafted into the French navy and found himself in 1919 one of the crew of a cruiser which the imperialists had dispatched to the coast of the young Soviet republic. Ton Duc Thang was one of those who refused to shoot at Russian workers and peasants and he hoisted a red flag over the ship.

People of Odessa remember Ton Duc Thang's heroic act, and the street bearing his name holds a place of honour at the Black Sea port. There are always fresh flowers near the memorial plaque on a house that stands at the beginning of the street. The plaque

was put up by Odessans as a tribute to Ton Duc Thang's exploit.

...In the warm afternoon breeze one can hear the rustle of plane trees and acacias along the alleys of the Maritime Boulevard. Below is the port of Odessa, one of the biggest ports in the Soviet Union. Ships are lined alongside the wharves and the arms of cranes swing back and forth above their holds.

Phan Huo Thang, a postgraduate student from Vietnam, and I were sitting on a bench on the boulevard, watching the freight liners disappear behind the horizon on their way to Bulgaria, Cuba, India, Vietnam...

"How far is Vietnam by sea?" I asked.

"Oh, I should say about ten thousand miles, a twenty-five-day trip. Quite a distance," he said with a sigh.

"The sailors say it's quite near..."

"In a way, yes," Thang laughed. "If you're thinking of the friendship that links our two countries, then it's indeed quite near."

Friendship of our peoples is a favourite subject with Phan Huo Thang. As secretary of the local organization of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union and one of the leaders of the Vietnamese community, he is in constant contact with the Odessa branch of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society and is familiar with its extensive and varied activities. Thang told me several times that during the years he had spent in the Soviet Union he constantly felt the cordial warmth of Soviet people, their friendliness towards him.

"I realize," he said, "that these feelings are not meant for me but for my wonderful country, my heroic people who are great friends of the working people in the Soviet Union."

"And why not for you too?" I objected.

"Well, a little for me too," he smiled again.

When he first came to study in the Soviet Union in 1968 he had completed a secondary school in Hanoi. Then he continued his studies in Odessa.

"Was it difficult?"

A Vietnamese postgraduate student during a consultation with the dean of the shipbuilding department of the Odessa Marine Engineering College.

"Yes, it was quite difficult sometimes, especially when I first came and knew little Russian. Of course all students coming from Vietnam study the Russian language for a whole year before taking up their particular subject. All the same it could be tough going when lectures began on special subjects, say, economics, mathematics or marine engineering. You will agree that this calls for a better knowledge of the language than is needed for carrying on a conversation on everyday subjects like the weather."

Odessa is known as a city of sailors and students. The Odessa College of Marine Engineering, which Phan Huo Thang had attended, and other educational institutions of the Black Sea port, have always had many foreign students, all of whom feel a constant concern for them on the part of both teachers and their fellow students.

"I know that the teachers have gone far beyond the call of duty in helping students like myself," Phan Huo Thang went on. "In my first year the Russian language teachers were particularly caring. Not only did they teach us in the classroom, but also took us around the city, went with us to museums and historical monuments, showed us educational films and explained to us materials in textbooks. We turned to them for help whenever we ran into difficulties and they always helped us. I don't have to tell you about our Soviet fellow students at the hostels, with whom we were in constant contact. In short, by the end of the first term I knew enough Russian and I passed the exams." (Thang spoke very good Russian, though with a slight accent, easily handling difficult turns of phrase and professional terms.)

After that Thang passed nine more sets of exams and wrote a graduation paper on the advantages of using new types of ships on the Black Sea-Vietnam route. He received "good" or "excellent" marks in all subjects. Incidentally, this is the case with all Vietnamese students, as I learned at the commission for foreign students at the Odessa City Soviet. The average mark of Vietnamese students enrolled in the city's educational institutions is 4.6 points, 5 being the highest.

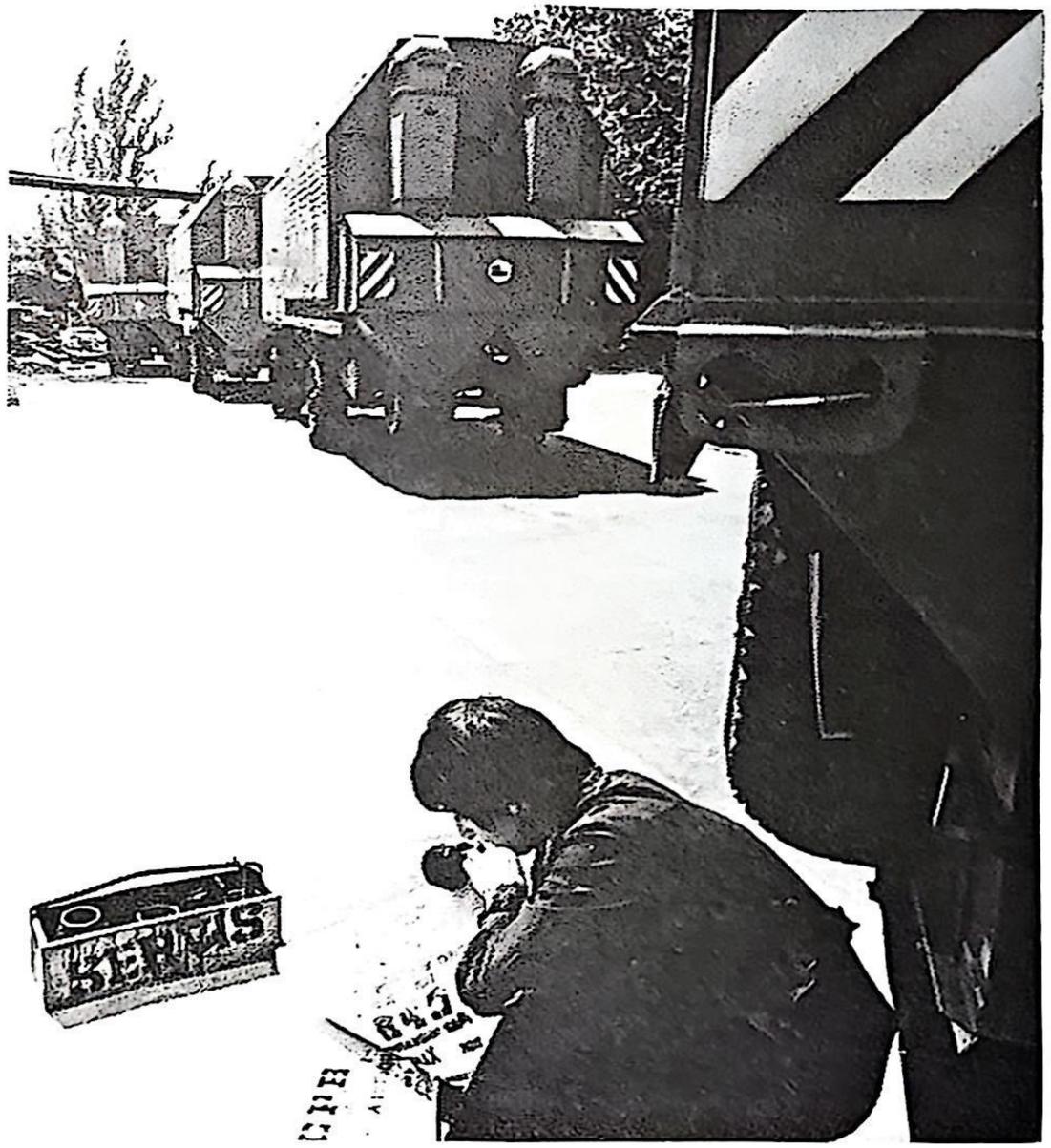
Phan Huo Thang returned home with a diploma from the Odessa College of Marine Engineering and worked in the republic's planning committee, taking an active part in the development of Vietnam's water transport. Then he returned to his alma mater in Odessa, this time

as a postgraduate student. Once again he saw familiar streets and boulevards, his old friends and teachers. He was particularly glad to meet again Dr. Pyotr Yakovlevich Ponarin who became Thang's scientific supervisor. Dr. Ponarin, who heads the department of the technology of freightage and marine management in the institute, told me that Thang was making excellent progress in writing his Candidate of Technical Sciences thesis entitled "Improvement of the Methods of Planning the Operation of Merchant Marine in Conditions of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam".

"The very title of the thesis," said Dr. Ponarin, "shows its practical significance, its importance in terms of the tasks now being carried out by socialist Vietnam in such a key sector as transport. Phan Huo Thang made a special trip to Vietnam in connection with his thesis. He did research in the republic's state planning committee, the ministry of transport and railways and at various ports. The interesting material he has collected and his profound analysis of the data show that he has all the makings of a good specialist and an outstanding executive capable of independent decision-making. In fact, I'd already noticed these qualities when he was writing his graduation paper under my supervision. Add to this his exceptional industry and the conscientiousness of a true scientist and you have an ideal postgraduate student, which is what Phan Huo Thang is."

When I told Thang about this he was embarrassed. "Pyotr Yakovlevich is much too kind," he said. "As for my thesis, a great deal of work still needs to be done, although not much time is left before I have to present it. My social activities also take a lot of time..."

As I have already said, Phan Huo Thang is secretary of the young Communists' organization of the Vietnamese community in Odessa. This is quite a demanding job



Mobile grain-drying units before shipment from Odessa to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

since the community consists of over 200 undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in eleven of Odessa's sixteen higher educational establishments including the university, the conservatoire, the college of marine engineering, and in institutes of marine engineering, of light industry and refrigerating industry, and in polytechnical, economics, hydrometeorological, medical and civil engineering institutes.

Thang does not like to talk about himself. When I ask him about his duties as the Komsomol secretary he unobtrusively changes the subject. With great interest and affection he speaks about Tran Huo Nghi who is writing a doctoral thesis at the marine engineering institute and about other fellow students, about the participation of "Vietnamese Odessans" in a Communist *subbotnik,** about his countrymen's trips to the hero cities of Leningrad, Kiev, Volgograd, Minsk, Novorossiisk and Moscow, and about a recent wedding.

It was like any another wedding in Odessa—there was champagne, congratulations and happy young faces—except that the parents and relatives of the bride and bridegroom were not present. Nguyen Thu Vinh and Tran Luc met each other and fell in love thousands of kilometres away from their homeland, and so their wedding was held at the Odessa College of Marine Engineering where Tran Luc is a student. It was attended by Vietnamese studying here and their Soviet friends.

One of the guests of honour at the wedding was Anatoli Radchenko, a teacher at the college and chairman of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society branch. He made all the necessary arrangements for the wedding which turned out to be a festive occasion, one which the future seaman and his youthful wife would always remember. Radchenko has great regard for Tran Luc, a former soldier who fought valiantly in the war against the US aggressors, a fine student and an amiable person.

The bride, Nguyen Thu Vinh, comes from a medical family. Her mother teaches at a medical school and her father is a doctor. The girl followed in their footsteps and is a student at the Odessa Medical Institute. She is also

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* *Subbotnik*—labour freely given to the state on a day off.

Soviet dockers loading cargoes for Vietnam.

very fond of poetry, and many verses were recited at the wedding about the sea, love and loyalty. They were probably particularly moving for the bride since she knew that Tran Luc would soon graduate and go on long voyages which for her would mean long waits, for such is the lot of a seaman's wife. She looked thoughtful for a moment, and then she was all smiles again: today it was her wedding day, and there was more music, songs and poems. Kim Kotrakov, dean of the college's electromechanical department, offered his congratulations, as did Pham Chiu, a graduate of the college who came to Odessa for practical training, and the community leaders. More and more wedding gifts were presented to the happy couple by friends and acquaintances, from the Vietnamese community and from the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society. It was an unforgettable day.

"Of course we don't have many such festive occasions," Phan Huo Thang said. "The main thing for us is to study."

He told me about lectures and seminars, practical training, the writing of graduation papers—all about his friends and very little about himself.

We had been sitting on a bench on the Maritime Boulevard, and the lights of the port began to go on below. Another heavily laden vessel unmoored, giving a low farewell hoot as it set course for distant parts. I looked at my watch. It was just as I was told at the Black Sea Steamship Line: the *Ilyich* was on her way to Haiphong carrying equipment for new Vietnamese projects.

...Motor ship *Balashikha* is completing her loading at Pier No. 10. In a few hours she will put out to sea, following a familiar route that will take her to Ho Chi Minh City, Vung Tau and Haiphong.

"This time," Captain Vladimir Melai says, "we are taking to our Vietnamese friends rolled stock and other metal, tubing, cement, timber and various other goods and equipment needed by the SRV. Our dockers have worked hard so that the ship can set sail several hours ahead of schedule. The crew on their part will try to save another eight to ten hours during the passage. On our arrival in Vietnam we will, as usual, sign an agreement with the Vietnamese dockers on socialist emulation in

Vietnamese children coming to spend their holiday in the Soviet Union are being greeted by Young Pioneers in Vladivostok.

unloading the *Balashikha* ahead of time. So we will be getting the handling equipment ready and opening the hatches beforehand and we'll fix up lighting for work at night, in short, we will do everything to help the dockers. This new form of international socialist emulation, originated at the Black Sea Steamship Line, in which both the ports of departure and arrival and ship crews take part, saves much time during cargo handling operations and raises the efficiency of every vessel."

The *Balashikha* is one of the 25 Soviet freight liners that are collective members of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society. Its crew were awarded the Soviet Order of Friendship of the Peoples in 1973 for the valour displayed in fulfilling their mission of delivering goods to Vietnam, and also the Vietnamese Order of Resistance.

...A bomb explosion split the sky over Haiphong. The officer on watch duty woke the captain and reported that the city and the port area were being bombed and that fires had broken out.

From the platform across the deck the captain could see the fiery glow in the distance. The beams of Vietnamese searchlights crisscrossed the sky and focused on a US fighter-bomber, the anti-aircraft guns went into action and in a moment the air pirate plunged down in a steep arc and crashed into the ground with a deafening blast not far from the port.

That night the *Balashikha* was in the roads, and it was only the next morning, when Soviet seamen helped to put out the fire at the port, that they saw the full extent of the devastation caused by the savage bombing of Haiphong.

That made all the more necessary the goods the *Balashikha* and other Soviet ships delivered to Vietnam. In those grim war times the *Balashikha* made eleven long, difficult, and heroic voyages to Haiphong: the ship

had to go round the Cape of Good Hope because the Suez Canal was closed as a result of the Israeli aggression against the Arab peoples. On the high seas the *Balashikha* was repeatedly buzzed by US Phantoms. Each time the loading and unloading at Haiphong took place amidst bombings and the fierce cannonade of anti-aircraft guns. But the courageous crew carried out their work calmly and efficiently.

Once the *Balashikha* and nine other Soviet ships carrying nearly 100,000 tons of essential goods for fighting Vietnam were blockaded by mines dropped by US planes. They could sail away, for the US command had warned that the mines dropped by parachute would go off only after three days by a radio signal from the US naval squadron cruising in Bac Bo Bay. But that would mean failing a friend in need, and the Soviet seamen remained in Haiphong and did not flinch through the long months of blockade, anxiety and tension.

I have copied down in my notebook some of the radio messages received from Soviet ships in those grim days. "Three mines have been dropped by parachute one cable length from ship," reported M/S *Divnogorsk*. From M/S *Grisha Akopyan* which sank after being hit by US bombs at the port of Cam Pha: "The captain is wounded, radio room smashed. Raging fire aboard ship. Am leaving radio room. Chief radio operator Neunylov." The tanker *Pevek* radioed: "A Phantom returning from a bombing raid of Haiphong fired large-calibre machine guns at us and rained cluster bombs on us. Five men are wounded." First mate of the M/S *Selemdzha* reported: "Today fifty US planes bombed Haiphong. Fuel depots have been destroyed. The port has been badly damaged. The ship's side has been hit and we have so far found seven large holes, and more than a hundred fragments have been picked up on the deck and in the holds. We have just

learned that the M/S *Boris Lavrenyov* which lies nearby has also been hit."

There had been numerous such episodes. In the Black Sea port of Ilyichevsk I saw a motor ship bearing the name of Valentin Khutorskoi. The ship he served on, *Alexander Grin*, had called at Haiphong many times. During one such call a fire broke out in the harbour. The ships and the port facilities were in danger. Valentin was the first to start fighting the fire. He and his comrades put out the flames but the courageous boatswain paid with his life for it. M/S *Boatswain Khutorskoi* has since moored many times at the Haiphong pier where Khutorskoi died a heroic death. Other ships named after Soviet seamen who died in Vietnam—*Boatswain Zotov* and *Mechanic Rybachuk*—are more reminders of those heroic times, of the collective feat of courageous Soviet mariners. The ships bearing the names of Soviet seamen who gave their lives for the happiness of a fraternal people continue to serve the great cause of rendering internationalist assistance to the Vietnamese people, to all people who need such assistance.

Алексей Серов

МАТЕРИАЛЬНАЯ СИЛА СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКОЙ СОЛИДАРНОСТИ

на английском языке

Цена 45 коп.

Alexei SEROV
The Power of Socialist Solidarity

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Alexei SEROV (born 1936) graduated from Moscow State University in 1960 and worked as a correspondent of several central Soviet newspapers. Since 1971 he has been on the staff of the Novosti Press Agency. He has been to Vietnam several times. After his trips there he wrote two books about the first socialist country in Southeast Asia and a series of articles and reports which were published in the Soviet Union and abroad.